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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Air Force Public Affairs: The Four
                   Models of Public Relations and
                   Excellence in Public Relations

Name of degree candidate: Tyrone M. Woodyard

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Thesis directed by: James E. Grunig, Ph.D.
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Based on the historical development of public relations, four models (press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetric, and two-way symmetric) were identified. Research suggests that federal government practitioners practiced public information. Recently, a team of public relations scholars identified characteristics of excellence in public relations programs. The purpose of this research is to identify which model of public relations is used most frequently in the Air Force and to determine if the characteristics of excellence are present in Air Force programs.

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This study is a quantitative analysis of Air Force public affairs. Questionnaires were mailed to 277 public affairs officers; 187 were returned, 175 were acceptable. The questionnaire contained statements that describe public affairs actions and behaviors representing the models. It also included questions relating to the characteristics of excellence.

The data revealed that there was no one dominant model. Air Force practitioners use a combination of the press agentry and public information models to achieve what they consider to be two-way symmetrical goals. The data also revealed that a few of the excellence characteristics are present in Air Force programs.

Air Force practitioners have acquired a substantial amount of public affairs training and education. They manage their programs strategically rather than historically, but do not utilize formal or scientific research techniques. Air Force public affairs officers tend to rely on previous experiences and gut-instinct research techniques. Consequently, they do not practice two-way symmetrical public relations, one of the more distinguished characteristics of excellence.

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS: THE FOUR MODELS

OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EXCELLENCE

IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

by

Tyrone M. Woodyard

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
1991

Advisory Committee:

Professor James E. Grunig, Chairman/Advisor
Professor Larissa A. Grunig
Professor Katherine C. McAdams

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, sisters and fiance: Cornelius, Barbara, Shelley, Tanya and Amanda. Thank you for the love, laughs, support and encouragement provided from the first class to the final defense.

Each one of you gave me the inspiration and will to conquer all.

May God continue to bless and keep us united, healthy, grateful and at peace.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While studying J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public relations models, I became curious about the application of current public relations theories and concepts to Air Force public affairs. Specifically, I wanted to find out which model or models are used by Air Force public affairs officers, and how they manage their programs. I also wanted to evaluate the Air Force's potential for excellence in public relations.

Air Force public affairs programs have a very visible and vital role in meeting Air Force goals. Therefore, it is important that public affairs officers be knowledgeable about the latest public relations management techniques and aware of current research. For purposes of this study, the term "research" implies formal scientific research methods. Informal research, in contrast, is "seat-of-the-pants, gut instinct" type reasoning. In most Air Force organizations practitioners are generally supportive of integrating research into their public affairs programs. They seem to understand that research can make public affairs programs more effective.

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Currently, the man or womanhours, personnel and related resources required to make research a vital component of Air Force public affairs seem to be unavailable. A reason often cited by practitioners for the void in public affairs research efforts is the reduced Defense budget. It appears that the demands of handling daily crises, managing undermanned staffs, working with limited resources, and serving under uncompromising commanders have pushed the research aspect of public affairs to a lower priority.

Conversely, graduate students and academic scholars have committed a significant amount of time and effort to examining civilian practitioners. Current research conducted in public relations tends to concentrate on corporate practitioners and private firms. This trend can put government (i.e. Air Force) practitioners at a disadvantage, compared to their corporate colleagues. As a result of the legal constraints, strict policies and political nature of government organizations, applying theories and concepts tested in the private sector can be difficult. Consequently, government practitioners do not consistently share the benefits of current public relations research. A possible solution to this dilemma

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is to conduct research on Air Force practitioners and compare the results with corporate practitioners.

For purposes of this study, public relations is defined as the "management of communication between an organization and its publics" (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Additionally, the terms public relations and public affairs will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine Air Force public affairs, to compare it with current public relations theories and present research on excellence in public relations, and then to determine how Air Force public affairs is practiced in theoretical terms. E. Pollack (1984) analyzed the behavior of 310 practitioners from 166 federal government agencies in relation to J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four public relations models. She concluded the model used most frequently in government organizations was public information. In this study, I will measure the four models in Air Force public affairs to identify which model is dominant and develop a logical explanation for why the model is dominant.

Recently, researchers have focused their efforts on developing a general theory of excellence in public relations. Their efforts have identified common characteristics of excellent public relations programs. A review of the theory of excellence in public relations literature coupled with an audit of Air Force public affairs will identify the similarities or differences in Air Force programs. The results also will help develop logical explanations for why differences, if any, exist.

The literature reviewed for this study will focus on the characteristics of excellence in public relations, theory of the four models of public relations; on public relations education; on management's schema for public relations; and on the historicist and strategic management theories of public relations. This study will be accomplished by correlating the four models with variables related to public relations behavior.

Although this study is similar to E. Pollack's (1984), there are distinct differences. She examined 166 federal government agencies that included a group of Air Force public affairs officers assigned to the Department of Defense Headquarters at the Pentagon. This study will focus on Air Force public affairs officers stationed at military bases throughout the United States.

Early research suggested there would be a correlation among the public relations models, organizational structure, and environmental constraints. However, E. Pollack (1984) reported conflicting evidence. She found no significant correlations between the models, organizational structure, environmental constraints or communication roles. A detailed literature review led to the development of this study. E. Pollack's conclusions provided the inspiration and foundation needed to attempt this study of Air Force practitioners.

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The United States Air Force evolved from the Army Air Corps. Throughout the history of the Air Force, commanders have recognized that it is their responsibility to the organization and country to keep the public informed. When the Air Force was formed as a separate service in September 1947, Stephen F. Leo, a former Maine journalist, was appointed the first director of public relations. However, Air Force public affairs activities began in August 1907 as a part of the Aeronautical Division in the Office of the Army Chief Signal Office. During World War I, public affairs

personnel were responsible for intelligence support, historical documentation and public affairs. To please the public, they were encouraged to tell the living human story of American Expeditionary Forces in Europe and report original stories of the deeds of American soldiers (AFR 190-1, 1989, p.19).

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed." This statement provides the foundation for the existence of Air Force public affairs.

Public affairs is responsible for supporting Air Force missions and for providing the public with the complete, accurate, and timely information it needs to understand issues and reach sound decisions about defense. Public affairs is a command responsibility and supports commanders and senior staff at most levels throughout the Air Force (AFR 190-1, 1989, p.16). Compared to commanders from previous decades, today's military commanders appear to be more aware of the place and purpose of public affairs. Consequently, they are providing leadership responsive to public opinion (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985).

GOALS OF AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The deterrence of war is a basic principle for any nation and a fundamental mission of its military forces. The effectiveness of deterrence largely depends on the credibility of the organization, which in this case is the U.S. Air Force. One of the goals of public affairs is to establish the credibility of Air Force programs, personnel and weapon systems. This is accomplished by developing, establishing and maintaining informative relationships with the public. By establishing credibility, public affairs can achieve other goals, such as generating and maintaining public support. In order to meet these simple but crucial goals, Air Force practitioners are dutybound to educate and inform the public about complex issues and missions in a clear uncomplicated manner. Due to the diversity and advanced scientific nature of Air Force missions this responsibility presents numerous challenges to Air Force practitioners.

The practice of public affairs in the Air Force is appropriate only to the extent that it supports Air Force missions and the public's right to know about those missions. As a public institution whose existence

depends on public support, providing the public with information is a requirement for the Air Force. Consequently, public affairs officers are continually faced with professional, and sometimes personal, decisions about the appropriateness of releasing information.

Often times the decision process puts military practitioners between the public and their commanders, who often "distrust the media and resent their intrusion and journalist who are constantly frustrated in the 'right to know' by military security or deception" (Cutlip, Broom & Center, 1985, p. 584). However, in its efforts to keep the public informed and run a successful public affairs program, the Air Force accepts the fact that there are circumstances when it cannot give out information to the general public (AFR 190-1, 1989).

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

Air Force public affairs programs interact with two general publics during peacetime, war and contingencies: external and internal. In general, the external public consists of individuals, groups and organizations that have no direct affiliation or contact with the Air Force. The internal public includes Air Force military and

civilian personnel, dependents, contractors and organizations directly connected with the Air Force. During war and contingencies the primary role of public affairs is to provide information to the public about Air Force operations. In peacetime, the role of public affairs is to maintain public understanding and support required to sustain a credible deterrent force.

To meet the goals and objectives of Air Force public affairs, the program was divided into three major functions: internal information, media relations, and community relations. Internal information programs keep Air Force people informed about the Air Force, Air Force missions, Department of Defense and national policy decisions, and any issues that relate to them. Media relations programs collect, analyze and disseminate unclassified, releasable information about Air Force activities to the public and news media. Community relations involves programs that help Air Force members become a part of the civilian community lifestyle and promote understanding and support of Air Force programs throughout civilian communities.

Public affairs has made significant contributions to the development and success of the Air Force. While supporting a variety of organizational missions, Air

Force public affairs officers have established themselves as key advisors to the commander and his staff. However, before Air Force officers are given the responsibility of managing a public affairs program, they are required to complete a comprehensive public affairs officers course taught by seasoned public affairs officers.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING

Air Force practitioners are educated and trained at the Defense Information School (DINFOS). This joint service school is operated by the U.S. Army with faculty and staff representing all services. DINFOS is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Air Force public affairs officers manage the communication programs of their organizations. They are responsible for advising the commander and staff officers on matters related to public affairs. Therefore, public affairs officers should have a broad knowledge of Air Force operations and be able to anticipate the impact of command and staff actions on internal and external audiences. (Public Affairs Handbook, 1985).

DINFOS offers courses from three departments: journalism, broadcasting and public affairs. The Public Affairs department uses case studies of public affairs and public relations problems as part of the course design. Air Force practitioners are taught public affairs techniques, foreign and domestic policy, resource management, research methods, news media and communicative law. Throughout their career, Air Force public affairs practitioners are offered professional development and advanced educational opportunities at military and civilian institutions.

Present and future proposed reductions in the defense budget have forced Air Force practitioners to prepare for a leaner future, specifically in the area of training, personnel and financial resources. Before the full impact of these reductions are felt, Air Force practitioners need to evaluate how they are practicing public relations and how they compare to corporate practitioners, in terms of overall effectiveness. Some of the question that should be asked are: Is the Air Force using appropriate public relations management techniques? Is there a more efficient or effective method for Air Force practitioners to practice public

affairs? If corporate and private practitioners are faced with similar financial and manpower shortages, how are they managing their public relations departments?

SUMMARY

This study will be beneficial to Air Force practitioners and public relations research because it will provide current information about the characteristics of Air Force public affairs. It also will provide researchers with an understanding of Air Force public affairs and some of the differences that exist between Air Force, corporate and private practitioners.

Finally, Air Force practitioners could benefit from this research by reviewing current theories and characteristics of excellence in public relations to determine the effectiveness of their public affairs programs. This study also could help them identify and integrate a few of the excellent public relations characteristics, methods and strategies into Air Force public affairs programs.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The goal of public relations (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 116) is to establish two-way communication and mutual understanding between the organization and its publics, with the end result being public acceptance of the organization. This general definition of the goal of public relations has been uniformly accepted by scholars and practitioners. However, when asked how public relations helps the organization increase profits, save money or meet budgetary constraints, practitioners instinctively seem to produce numbers rather than dollars.

Monthly reports detailing the number of press releases, tours, media inquiries and interviews handled by the public relations staff are submitted to CEO's, presidents, commanders and other members of the organization's hierarchy to justify the contributions of public relations. Unfortunately, numbers alone will not enhance or secure the future of public relations-- especially during the organization's annual budget review and allocation process. Today's practitioners are recognizing the need to develop an effective and credible

evaluation process that accurately reflects the value and contributions of public relations to the overall success of their organizations.

J. Grunig (1990c) argued that the contributions of effective public relations departments are not limited to developing and building relationships between the organization and its publics. He stated that public relations also contributes \ ) the organizations bottom line, i.e. profits and losses, by "reducing the costs of litigation, regulation, legislation, pressure campaigns, boycotts or lost revenue that results from bad relationships with publics" (p.3).

Furthermore, J. Grunig (1990c) believed that public relations helped organizations make money by cultivating relationships with donors, consumers, shareholders, and legislators. If the contributions of public relations were explained to senior management in a clear and tangible manner - somehow identical or similar to J. Grunig's description - practitioners would be able to present a stronger case for their needs and existence within the organization. Presently, researchers are developing a general theory of public relations that describes the ideal makeup of an excellent public relations program.

A team of public relations scholars, headed by
J. Grunig (1986), conducted research funded by the
International Association of Business Communicators
(IABC) Research Foundation to develop a general theory of
excellence in public relations. They were searching for
the characteristics of excellent public relations
programs and how these programs make their organizations
effective. The study involved 200 organizations in the
United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and
included responses from the senior public relations
practitioner, the CEO and 20 employees.

THEORY OF EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

The basic premise of the excellence theory is that
departments practicing "excellent public relations" are
effective because they use strategic management
techniques, sophisticated models of public relations,
have managerial traits, and are academically trained in
public relations. Theory of excellence literature
implies that public relations programs that possess the
identified characteristics enhance the overall
effectiveness of their organization. However,
practitioners must be knowledgeable about the theory and
its characteristics before it can be applied to their
programs.

To guide the development of their general theory, IABC researchers reviewed literature on organizational effectiveness, organizational communication, organizational structure, strategic management, models of public relations and other theories of communication and public relations. Although the theory of excellence in public relations remains in its early developmental stages, which means its subject to revisions and refinement, the literature, findings, and characteristics described by the research team will be applied to this study of Air Force public affairs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS

During the course of their literature review, the IABC research team identified 14 specific characteristics and three effects of excellent public relations programs. (See Figure 1 for a listing of the characteristics). They theorized that an excellent public relations department will posses specific characteristics and make significant contributions to the overall success and effectiveness of the organization. The characteristics are grouped into three levels: Micro, meso and macro.

FIGURE 1.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS

I.   MICRO LEVEL

     1. Managed strategically

II.   MANAGERIAL (MESO) LEVEL

     2. A single or integrated public relations
        department
     3. Separate function from marketing
     4. Direct reporting relationship to senior
        management
     5. Two-way symmetrical model
     6. Senior public relations person in the
        managerial role
     7. Potential for excellent public relations,
        as indicated by:
        a. Knowledge of symmetrical model
        b. Knowledge of managerial role
        c. Academic training in public relations
        d. Professionalism
     8. Schema for public relations in the organization
        reflects the two-way symmetrical model
     9. Equal opportunity for men and women in public
        relations

(Figure 1. continued)

III.   MACRO LEVEL

        10. Organic rather than mechanical organizational
            structure
        11. Symmetrical system of internal communication
        12. Turbulent, complex environment with pressure
            from activist groups
        13. Public relations director has power in or
            with the dominant coalition
        14. Participative rather than authoritarian
            organizational culture

IV.   EFFECTS OF EXCELLENT PUBLIC RELATIONS

        15. Micro-level programs meet communication
            objectives
        16. Job satisfaction is high among employees
        17. At the macro level, reduces cost of
            regulation, pressure and litigation

The first level is the micro or individual level. This describes the planning and evaluation of an individual public relations program. The second level is the meso or managerial level. This refers to how the public relations department is organized and managed. The final level is the macro or environmental level. This level explains public relations behavior, the relationship of public relations to organizational effectiveness, and critical evaluations of the role of public relations in society. This study only will address the characteristics at the micro and meso level.

MICRO/INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

In order to achieve excellence in public relations specific conditions must be met at each level. At the micro or individual level, literature suggests that excellent public relations programs must be managed strategically. According to J. Grunig (1990c, p.2) organizations that practice strategic public relations develop programs to communicate with the internal and external publics that provide the greatest threats and opportunities for the organization. He claimed that strategic management is a normative theory, which

describes how public relations should be practiced in an ideal situation. The theory of strategic management is a smaller yet vital part of the general theory of excellence in public relations.

Similarly, the theory of excellence in public relations claimed that strategically managed programs involved identifying potentially disruptive or supportive publics, developing a communication program designed specifically for those publics, and helping the organization manage its interdependence with the public. The details of the strategic management of public relations will be addressed in a later section of this study.

MESO/MANAGERIAL LEVEL

At the meso or managerial level, J. Grunig (1990b) described eight characteristics. They are: Public relations should be separated from marketing; the practitioner should report directly to senior management; public relations should be a separate department; the two-way symmetrical model of public relations should be practiced; the practitioner should be knowledgeable about

the symmetrical model, managerial role, have academic training in public relations and maintain professionalism; the organization's schema for public relations should reflect the two-way symmetrical model; and there should be equal opportunities for men and women in public relations. While some of the characteristics are self explanatory (i.e., separate function from marketing, direct reporting relationship to senior management) others require a more detailed explanation. They also will be addressed later in this study.

Based on a review of Air Force public affairs literature (AFR 190-1, 1990) and my experience as an Air Force public affairs officer, I conclude - with a degree of confidence - that a few of the characteristics researchers identified in excellent public relations programs exist in Air Force programs. At the individual level, Air Force programs appear to be managed somewhat strategically. Every Air Force public affairs department has programs for internal information, community relations and media relations. It could be argued that these departments were strategically developed to manage communicate between the Air Force and its publics.

These three programs are valuable because they communicate with the Air Force's most strategic publics. Each one of theses publics, internal, community, and media, have the potential to disrupt or enhance Air Force operational missions. Effective internal information programs can result in high morale, higher productivity, and retention. Community relations programs develop and foster understanding, acceptance, support of the Air Force, and respect for Air Force people and their families. Media relations programs provide the Air Force opportunities to communicate what they do, why they do it, and how they do it.

At the managerial level, Air Force public affairs is a separate function from marketing and is a single department within the organization. Air Force public affairs is a command responsibility that supports commanders and senior staff (AFR 190-1, 1990, p.16). The senior practitioner manages the public affairs department and supervises a staff of practitioners. He or she reports directly to the organizations senior commander and provides advice and counsel for senior staff officers.

Equal opportunities for men and women in the Air Force and public affairs are governed by federal regulations and enforced by the commander. These facts provide empirical evidence that the corresponding characteristics of excellent public relations programs are present in Air Force public affairs. On the other hand, a closer examination of Air Force programs should be conducted to determine its overall potential for excellence in public relations.

The presence of five of the nine characteristics of excellence addressed in this study provided argumentive support that there is potential for excellence in Air Force public affairs. This suggests that Air Force programs are not as out of step with the general theory of excellence in public relations as one might be led to believe. More importantly, this study could determine the true potential for excellence in Air Force public affairs, as described by the IABC research team. However, the long term effectiveness of this study depends on the willingness and ability of Air Force practitioners to acknowledge, learn and develop the characteristics of excellent public relations programs.

Four models of public relations have been developed that described public relations techniques used by practitioners. Research has shown the models exist in most public relations departments. As the theory of excellence in public relations developed, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) argued that excellent programs would practice the more advanced and sophisticated model of public relations.

PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS

J. Grunig's (1984) research focusing on the values, goals and historical activities of public relations practitioners led to the development of four models (press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric) of public relations behavior. J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) believed the models evolved during the developmental stages of public relations dating back to the 1850's. The latest model, two-way symmetric, surfaced in the 1960's.

During his individual research of the models, J. Grunig (1984) used two variables to examine the models: Direction and purpose. He used direction to describe the models as one-way or two-way. One-way

communication is a monologue that disseminates information. Two-way communication is a dialogue that exchanges information. J. Grunig used purpose to describe the model as asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communication leaves the organization and attempts to change the attitude or behavior of the public. It encourages imbalanced communication.

Conversely, symmetrical communication is balanced. The relationship between the organization and the public is adjusted during the communication process. J. Grunig (1989) later reviewed the models and concluded that press agentry and public information were one-way asymmetrical models. The direction and purpose of the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models were clearly identified by their titles.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) claimed the term "model" is used in this instance as it is used in the sciences, a simplified representation of reality. Model is used to describe a set of values and pattern of behavior displayed by a public relations department or practitioner while they conduct public relations programs. Following are brief descriptions of the four models.

PRESS AGENTRY/PUBLICITY

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) maintained that the first model of public relations was the "press agentry" model, which evolved between 1850 and 1900. However, there had been "public-relations-like" activities throughout history. They claim the first full-time specialists to practice public relations were the press agents of the mid-nineteenth century. These practitioners practiced the press agentry model of public relations for such heros as Andrew Jackson, Daniel Boone, and Buffalo Bill Cody. One of the most distinguished practitioners was P.T. Barnum, the famous circus promoter. He is given credit for coining the term, "There's a sucker born every minute."

When using the press agentry model, the practitioner attempts to publicize the organization and its actions. Media attention is sought in almost any possible manner. This model is frequently used to describe propagandist type public relations.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

During the twentieth century, big business increased the wealth of the United States. It seemed businessmen were more concerned with profits than health and safety

of workers. According to J. Grunig and Hunt (1984),
publicity was used to fight large business organizations.
Journalists who exposed corrupt business practices were
called "muckrakers." Ivy Lee, a journalist writing about
business for a New York newspaper, is recognized as one
of the first practitioners to employ the public
information model.

Lee's success at writing about banking, law and Wall
Street investments led him to believe he had a talent for
explaining complicated and misunderstood facts to the
public (Hiebert, 1966, p. 35). He developed a philosophy
of "the public be informed." The idea was to tell the
truth about an organization's actions. If the truth was
damaging, Lee's philosophy was to change the behavior of
the organization so the truth could be told without fear
(J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p.31).

When using the public information model, the
practitioner acts as a journalist in residence for the
organization. He or she provides truthful and accurate
information. Negative information, though not
volunteered, would be released in response to inquiry.

TWO-WAY ASYMMETRIC

Edward L. Bernays is considered one of the founders of the two-way asymmetric model (J. Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The nephew of the famed psychologist Sigmund Freud, Bernays applied his interest in psychology, behavioral and social science to his public relations practice.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990, p.4) claimed that the inclusion of a scientific approach made the practice of public relations two-way.

While serving on the Creel Committee on Public Information, Bernays made major contributions to the government's efforts to convince citizens to support World War II. He believed organizations manipulating publics to behave as organizations wanted them to behave would ultimately benefit those publics. Bernays reasoned that the secret of successful manipulation wa in understanding the motivations of people and in using research to identify the messages most likely to produce the attitudes and behavior desired by the organization.

When using the two-way asymmetric model, the practitioner acts as a persuader. Research is used to

identify the messages most likely to produce the support of the publics without having to change the behavior of the organization.

TWO-WAY SYMMETRIC

J. Grunig & Hunt (1984) suggested that Lee and Bernays wrote about the possibility of a two-way model of public relations. Consequently, there is no single individual credited with the development of the two-way symmetric model. Public relations educators, leading practitioners, Lee and Bernays are all collectively recognized for formalizing this model.

J. Grunig (1990c) argued that extensive research on the models has shown that the two-way symmetrical model is the most effective model. He concluded that the model is more socially responsible and ethical because it "manages conflict rather than wages war" (p.11). This model is based on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with publics. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) maintained that the two-way symmetrical model is not only the most ethical approach to public relations, but also the most effective model when used to contribute to an organization's goals and objectives.

Conversely, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) have acknowledged that a limited number of practitioners actually practice the true intent of the two-way symmetrical model. Fortunately, - and to the benefit of the profession - this has not discouraged educators and researchers from teaching and challenging this advanced model of public relations. Theory of excellence literature suggests that excellent public relations programs employ the two-way symmetrical model.

When using the two-way symmetric model, the practitioner acts as a mediator, facilitating communication between an organization and its publics. Bargaining, negotiating and conflict resolution strategies are used to develop a cooperative relationship, and change the attitudes and behaviors of both the organization and its publics.

RESEARCH ON THE FOUR MODELS

J. Grunig (1984) maintained that one specific model of public relations is not always appropriate for all conditions. The best model could depend on the nature of the organization, its situation, and the environment. This suggests the organization or practitioner must

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decide which model or combination of models is most appropriate for the situation. J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) predicted that the public information model would be used most frequently by government practitioners. E. Pollack (1984) and R. Pollack (1986) tested the models in scientific and federal government organizations. Their results provided empirical evidence supporting J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) prediction.

J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) prediction seemed logical based on the description of the public information model and the public relations behavioral characteristics of government practitioners. Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) claimed that military public affairs programs emphasized information dissemination through controlled media (i.e, base newspapers, command newsletters, and briefings) and neglect fact finding and feedback.

Military practitioners were once called "public information" officers. The title was later changed to "public affairs" officer, a more "neutral title that appeared to attract less flack from congress and the media" (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 1985, p.583). In 1979, the Air Force became the last branch to make the change.

Although the public information model seemed popular in government organizations, J. Grunig (1989, p.30) argued that it has been the most difficult model to measure reliably because its not practiced as a pure model. Public information involves the distribution of information, which is a characteristic of all four models. Furthermore, he maintained that press agentry was overall the most popular, and the two-way asymmetrical model was primarily present in corporations. J. Grunig (1989) discovered that rarely did the two-way symmetrical model dominate. This suggests that different types of organizations do in fact practice different models of public relations.

L. Grunig (1989, p. 176) stated not all organizations require a sophisticated form of public relations. She believed depending on the goals and objectives of the organization, practitioners can be successful employing the less sophisticated press agentry or public information model. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) believed the four models are used strategically to deal with different public relations problems or sources of conflict.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) recently hypothesized the most effective and excellent public relations programs will be more symmetrical. A close examination of the characteristics identified by the theory of excellence in public relations programs revealed that the two-way symmetrical model is present in at least five of the 14 characteristics.

J. Grunig (1990b) suggested that excellent public relations programs have mixed motives: "They balance attempts to persuade publics with the asymmetrical model with attempts to negotiate with them using the symmetrical model" (p.21). Literature implies that excellent public relations programs will practice the two-way symmetrical model that encourages dialogue, feedback and understanding between the organization and its publics.

Although the four models consistently appear in public relations literature and research, they have not been shielded from criticism. Olasky (1987) did not accept the models as an accurate description of the development of public relations. He argued that organizations practiced "private relations" before practicing public relations. Olasky claimed that

organizational managers either communicated directly with publics, or felt no obligation to communicate with their publics. He maintained that public relations did not originate from press agentry techniques, as described by J. Grunig and Hunt (1984).

Despite Olasky's argument, the literature reviewed provided sufficient and empirical evidence that the four models are accurate descriptions of public relations behavior. Furthermore, they have been accepted as valid and reliable measures of public relations behavior. Applying the models to this study will enhance the credibility of the final analysis and provide data for further research.

Literature reviewed suggests the dominant public relations model is not limited to determining the values and goals of the practitioner. It also can be used by researchers to identify the practitioners role in the organization. Roles are used to describe the daily behavior patterns of individual communication practitioners (J. Grunig, 1990c).

PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES

Broom (1986) and Dozier (1987) discussed two major roles in public relations: manager and technician. Managers make policy decision and are held accountable for the success or failure of public relations programs. They view themselves and are viewed by others in the organization as public relations experts. Managers facilitate communication between management and publics, and guide management through a rational public relations problem solving process.

Technicians do not participate in management decision making. They provide technical services such as writing, editing, photography, media contacts, or production of publications. Technicians represent the majority of public relations practitioners (J. Grunig, 1990b). The manager and technician roles are basic roles in a public relations department. Both roles are essential to the program, and it is not unusual for one person to perform the duties of a manager and technician (Broom & Dozier, 1986).

J. Grunig (1990b, p. 23) argued that public relations departments can not be effective without managers. Furthermore, he believed that in order to be

effective, programs could not be simply managed, they had to be strategically managed. Wetherell (1989) found a correlation between the managerial role and the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models. This discovery seems to provide support for the theory of excellence in public relations, which prescribed the managerial role and the two-way symmetrical model for excellent programs.

The managerial and technician roles seem to emphasize formal public relations education and practical experience. Consequently, the amount of academic public relations training and experience acquired by practitioners could determine which role they fulfill in the organization. J. Grunig (1990b) suggested that excellent public relations requires a knowledge of the roles and models of public relations. This implies that the success of practitioners and their programs could be influenced by the amount of formal public relations education they have acquired.

PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

Bernays (1961) stressed the importance of education for practitioners in the early developmental stages of public relations. He believed practitioners had to

maintain certain educational standards and be thoroughly prepared to give advice to others. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) theorized that the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models were sophisticated methods of practicing public relations that require specialized training. E. Pollack (1984) and J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) suggested that practitioners without formal public relations training or education are limited to practicing the press agentry and public information models.

Research examining organizational public relations behavior (McMillan, 1985; J. Grunig and L. Grunig, 1989) suggests that the amount of formal public relations training and education influences the model of public relations employed by the practitioner. E. Pollack (1984) discovered that government agencies with practitioners who had graduate degrees in public relations were more likely to practice a two-way form of communication with their publics. Practitioners with little or no formal public relations training practiced one-way communication. Training and education in these studies consisted of academic degrees, seminars or courses in public relations.

E. Pollack's (1984) survey of government practitioners revealed that 70 percent had little or no formal public relations training. Therefore, government practitioners only had the skills and training to practice the one-way models. She also found a positive correlation between practitioners with formal public relations training and education and the two-way asymmetric and symmetric models. Her research also revealed a negative correlation between educated practitioners and the press agentry and public information models.

Wetherell (1989) also discovered a correlation between education and the four models of public relations. Her data suggested that practitioners with the required knowledge were more likely to practice the two-way models. This held true even though practitioners had the ability to practice the one-way models. She also found that practitioners using the one-way models did not have the public relations education or training to utilize the two-way models. One of the most relevant contributions E. Pollack (1984) made to this study was the discovery of a correlation between Air Force practitioners and the public information model.

E. Pollack's (1984) findings suggested that practitioners with formal training and education were more likely to practice one of the two-way models. E. Pollack concluded Air Force practitioners tend to practice public information. However, Van Dyke (1989) suggested that military practitioners have the education and training skills required to practice the two-way models. There could be a reasonable explanation for these conflicting conclusions. Therefore, this study will attempt to resolve these conflicting findings by examining the education and training level of Air Force practitioners and how it relates to the models of public relations.

Van Dyke (1989) studied 45 Navy public affairs officers and concluded they favored the two-way symmetric model. The officers also were asked which model they felt described Navy public affairs activities. They selected the two-way asymmetric model. However, according to Van Dyke's performance data, Navy public affairs officers were actually using the public information model.

While these performance data support the hypothesis that government practitioners use the public information model, Van Dyke's (1989) study used a very limited

measuring technique to test for the models. Another possible explanation for these conflicting conclusions may be the legal constraints placed on government practitioners by Congress.

GILLETTE ACT

During the 1900's the success of publicist practitioners found its way into government agencies. There was a concern about government press agents glorifying their departments, promoting public support for choice programs, and influencing legislation in congress. This movement toward the press agentry model led to congressional intervention (Pimlott, 1951).

Representative Frederick H. Gillette, who later became speaker of the House, drafted a bill prohibiting government agencies from hiring publicity experts unless money was specifically appropriated for that purpose by Congress (Pimlott, 1951). The bill became the Gillette Act of 1913. This act basically limits government practitioners to using the public information model (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

In 1972 the Gillette Act was reaffirmed by Public Law 92-351, Section 608(a). This law prohibits government spending on publicity or propaganda purposes

designated to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985, p.13). Van Dyke (1989) could have suggested that Navy practitioners have the knowledge and expertise required to practice the two-way models, but are constrained by the Gillette Act and related legislation to practice the public information model.

Although the Gillette Act appears to limit government practitioners to the public information model, it does not prohibit them from acquiring the expertise and knowledge required to practice the two-way models. R. Pollack (1986) found evidence that suggests departments with high levels of public relations training received more support from top management, compared to departments with no training. This leads one to believe it is possible for government practitioners to gain the support of top management through education and training.

SCHEMA FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

In this study, schema refers to top management's perception and understanding of the public relations function in the organization. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990, p.22) argued that "the way in which members of top

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management conceptualize public relations, in turn, essentially dictates how an organization practices it". In the Air Force, the top manager is the base commander or senior ranking commanding officer at an installation. Therefore, the commander's or management's schema for public relations can influence the model of public relations employed.

Nanni (1990) maintained that the practitioner's view of public relations may or may not be the same as management's. She believed these differing views could have an effect on the practitioner's public relations behavior. Nanni attributed her findings to the fact that management has the final decision on how public relations will be practiced by the organization. Her research suggests that gaining the confidence and professional respect of management is vital to practicing effective public relations.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) reasoned that the only way an organization could use the two-way models of communication was with management's understanding and support. They found management support and understanding generally correlated positively with the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models and negatively with

the press agentry and public information models. McMillan (1984) and Fabiszak (1986) provided additional empirical evidence supporting the Grunigs' reasoning. They studied trade and professional associations and hospitals, respectively, and found positive correlations with management support and the two-way models.

Management support often increases with the success of the practitioner's overall performance. The professional, and in some cases personal, relationship between the practitioner and management frequently determines the model of public relations practiced. E. Pollack (1984) concluded practitioners without top management support were more likely to practice press agentry. She also discovered that practitioners who used the two-way models worked for senior managers who understood the role of public relations in the organization.

One of the most profound conclusions about management schema was made by Nolte (1978). He believed that if a public relations program were to succeed, management had to believe in it and participate. This study will examine the support and understanding Air Force commanders have of their public affairs programs.

Research suggests Air Force practitioners who have earned the support and confidence of their commanders will more likely practice one of the two-way models. For those practitioners who do not have the support of the commander, research would predict they will employ the one-way models.

Management does not limit its influence to the models of public relations practiced. It is not unusual for the management philosophy of the public relations practitioner to reflect the organization's historical management style. J. Grunig (1990c, p.13) argued that less excellent programs will "justify communication programs historically, rather than strategically." Broom (1986) believed closed-system public relations had characteristics similar to traditional, institutionalized behavior. This behavior reinforced the style, power, and control of top management. This suggests public relations departments rarely changed their programs to accommodate the environment but, instead, reflect the organization's characteristics.

HISTORICAL CAUSAL MODEL

The historicist model of public relations influences practitioners through traditional patterns of socialization and routinization. Communication programs reflect what always has been done rather than what should be done to manage the communication between the organization and its publics (J. Grunig, 1990c). Organizations educate, train, and groom inexperienced practitioners to employ methods that have been used for years.

Broom (1986) believed as the organization and its environment become oblivious to environmental inputs, the public relations structure and process become routine and institutionalized. Furthermore, he claimed that traditional institutionalized behavior represents the practice of closed-system public relations. Dozier (1987) later implied that organizations that favor rigid system codes (i.e., military organizations), political conservation, and exclude practitioners from the dominant coalition are more prone to employ the historicist model. He added that those organizations also seem to favor the press agentry and public information models of public relations.

Similarly, Dozier and L. Grunig (p.21, 1987) described the structure of the historical causal model as one that replicates itself over time. The replicating patterns, which also are present in public relations functions, seem to be the product of a closed organization. In this situation, the closed organization strives to achieve its objectives and goals without regard or concern for its environment.

Pfeffer (1978) believed major structural changes required a revolutionary event, such as a takeover or change in management. This unusual event might "shock" the organization and its managers into rethinking their structure, goals and policies. Similarly, Stinchcomb (p.119, 1968) argued that change could occur if the dominant coalition "converted to a new set of values".

Broom (1986) observed that public relations responses reflect the historical preferences of those with decision-making power. Consequently, the structure and behavior of the organization represent the historical goals and objectives of the decision-makers who rarely change their behavior. He further argued that the organization's public relations commitment to the function would become a survivor of routine decision

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making. This stubborn type of behavior often reflects how public relations is managed by the organization.

Practitioners working for the organization are indoctrinated to employ the historical behavior of the organization. Stinchcomb (1968) called this process an "infinite loop," where social forces act to ensure an activity is maintained. A statement developed for a previous condition becomes the standard response, and a "tradition" is born. In line with the historicists' causal model, public relations behaviors are lost in history and not responsive to environmental changes or inputs. Dozier (1987) concluded the public relations department becomes functionary and its original mission is lost in history.

Dozier and L. Grunig (1987) claimed that some significant event or crisis in the organization's history defined the structure of the public relations department. "Perhaps a crisis led to formation of a public relations unit to deal with a specific problem, or a member of the dominant coalition once decided that the organization needed public relations" (1987, p.23). Surprisingly, their theory sounds similar to the development of Air Force public affairs. Early military practitioners were

tasked by senior commanders to tell the public about the deals and heroics of American servicemen in Europe (AFR 190-1).

The historicist theory will be examined and compared to how Air Force practitioners manage public relations. Research has identified ways to manage effectively a public relations program and to meet organizational goals while responding to environmental changes. Management theories of public relations have strong ties to the historical causal model. However, literature reviewed suggests strategic management could improve overall effectiveness of public relations programs.

STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS

Research is a vital component of strategic management. Scholars strongly argue the value and importance of research to manage public relations programs effectively. One of the benefits of research is its ability to identify potential issues and help develop programs to communicate with publics that present a threat to the organization's overall success.

J. Grunig (1987) argued for strategic management where public relations programs are constantly revised and replaced to meet changing conditions in the

environment. He also acknowledged that "it's possible to 'manage' a public relations program without research, if 'manage' means to run traditional programs as efficiently as possible without little change from year to year."

There are two types of research involved in strategic management of public relations, formative and evaluative. The former is used to identify problems, define publics and issues, and plan public relations programs. The latter is used to measure the effectiveness of programs. Freeman (1951) argued that strategic planning was not the sole answer to strategic management. He believed strategic programs and policies put into action by practitioners should be the result of an effective, strategically managed program.

The key to successfully employing strategic management is recognizing the value of research and selecting the proper research methods for the organization. J. ᴄ ᴜniᴏ (1990c) described five steps in the strategic management of public relations. The first step involved identifying issues that are important to the organization and managing the organizations response to those issues. This is often called issues management.

The second step involved the segmentation of publics that respond differently to those issues. During the third step, an objective must be identified for communication programs designed to help manage the organizations interdependence with its strategic publics. The fourth step uses the identified objective to plan communication programs. The final step evaluates the effects of the communication programs in meeting their objectives.

An argument could be presented that Air Force publics are strategically divided into their internal information, media and community relations programs. The counter argument could be these divisions may have been effective during the development of Air Force public affairs. However today, these programs are similar to corporations and private firms and not strategically effective. A more acceptable form of strategic management would be to development a program within the public affairs department designed to communicate specifically with a strategic public that interferes with routine organizational operations.

J. Grunig (1987) believed practitioners would be better prepared to counsel management on issues by using strategic management techniques. One of the responsibilities of Air Force public affairs officers is

to counsel commanders on public affairs issues affecting mission accomplishment (AFR 190-1, 1989). These similarities suggest strategic management concepts should be present in Air Force public affairs programs.

This study will examine if Air Force practitioners recognize the value of research, and if they implement strategic programs in their public affairs departments. Research suggests practitioners will be better prepared to counsel and advise management on issues, publics and environmental changes if they practice strategic management.

SUMMARY

The proposed study will review public relations theories and concepts, to explain the behavior of Air Force practitioners. It also will examine the public relations education level and characteristics of Air Force practitioners to determine their potential for excellence in public relations.

Specifically, this study will explore which model of public relations dominates in the United States Air Force. Additionally, it will examine how education and management's schema for public relations influences behavior, and how Air Force practitioners manage public relations programs, historically or strategically.

Results will provide explanations for practitioner behavior, and validate reasons why the model used is effective or ineffective for the Air Force. This exploratory and explanatory study proposes a hypothesis and four research questions.

HYP: The most common model of public relations used in the Air Force is public information.

RQ 1: How do education and management's schema for public relations influence the model used by Air Force practitioners?

RQ 2: Are Air Force public affairs programs managed strategically or historically?

RQ 3: Do Air Force practitioners have the public relations education required to practice the two-way models?

RQ 4: Do Air Force public affairs programs have the characteristics of excellent public relations programs?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A self-administered mail questionnaire was developed using questions adapted from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) questionnaire. The IABC questionnaire was designed by researchers (at the University of Maryland, Syracuse University, San Diego State University and the Cranfield Institute of Technology in the United Kingdom) studying how to determine excellence in public relations and communication management. Their research was part of an on going six-year study funded by the IABC Research Foundation and several corporations.

The questions were reviewed and, where necessary, translated into military terminology familiar to Air Force public affairs officers. Additional questions were incorporated to determine respondents' level of education, training and experience as a Air Force public affairs officer.

The original IABC questionnaire used a fractionation scale to measure response. In this study, I adopted a Likert type scale that I believed respondents would be more familiar with. The Likert type scale also was

required by the Air Force Military Personnel Center's Survey branch, the Air Force's approving authority for research conducted on Air Force personnel.

Questions described or identified the concepts of the four models of public relations, excellence in public relations, management schema for public relations, and historicist or strategic management techniques. These concepts were operationalized by measuring the numerical response given to the question. Each question described a particular type of public relations behavior that was correlated with the models.

Education, training, and experience, were measured by their type of academic degree, level of military training, and number of years as a public affairs officer. Respondents recorded a "1" if they had practiced fewer than two years, a "2" if they had practiced two to four years, a "3" if they had practiced five to ten years, a "4" if they had practiced 11-19 years, and a "5" if they had practiced public affairs over 20 years.

To measure formal public relations training and education respondents were asked to identify their undergraduate degree and all levels of public relations training they had completed. This included advanced

academic degrees, military public affairs courses and seminars. A combination of open-end and closed-end questions were used along with a Likert type scale. All responses were recorded on the questionnaire. Additionally, a section for written comments was provided. The questionnaire contained 87 questions and took roughly 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Using a mailed self-administered questionnaire was the most feasible and realistic data gathering process because of funding constraints, academic deadlines, administrative limitations and logistical challenges (Backstrom & Hursh, 1971; Babbie, 1989). Additionally, the questionnaire format helped produce clear, accurate responses that could be coded easily for statistical analysis.

A Likert type scaling technique was used. Respondents were asked to select a number from one to five to estimate how well the statement described their public relations organization or behavior. A score of one meant the respondent strongly agreed with the description, a score of two meant they agreed, three meant they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A score of four meant respondents disagreed and a score of five meant they strongly disagreed with

the statement. Pavlik (1987) maintained that recent studies (McMillian, 1984; E. Pollack, 1984; R. Pollack, 1986) revealed strong evidence of validity and reliability in the four models. See appendix A for complete copy of questionnaire.

Section A of the questionnaire described specific behavior representing the models of public relations. Section B asked questions measuring for strategic or historicist management techniques. Section C included questions related to management's schema for public relations and the commander's public affairs knowledge. Section D measured the expertise level of practitioners by describing characteristics of the four models. The final section included demographic questions relating to sex, military rank, experience and job titles.

To minimize confusion, detailed instructions were printed throughout the questionnaire. To protect the confidentiality of respondent data, the questionnaires were not pre-coded. Coding could have generated questions from the respondents that could have put me in the position of biasing their responses.

The comfort of the respondents was a concern. Therefore, the research proposal was submitted to the University of Maryland's Human Subjects Research Review

committee. This helped ensure ethical standards were upheld in addition to the enforcement of proper academic research standards. The proposal was also submitted to the Air Force Military Personnel Center's Personnel Survey branch for approval.

SAMPLE POPULATION

According to Figueroa (personal communication, December 1989), there were 469 military public affairs officers in the Air Force. This number fluctuated as a result of retirements, separations and cross-training in and out of the public affairs career field. Furthermore, recent overall reductions throughout the Air Force have affected the career field. Based on the purpose of this study and my knowledge of Air Force public affairs, a random sample of 277 officers were selected to participate in this study. Names and addresses were obtained from the U.S. Air Force Public Affairs Staff Directory.

The sample was stratified by military rank. This helped produce a sample population that reflected the public affairs officers corps. Junior officers consisted of second lieutenants through captains. Senior officers included majors through colonels.

Questionnaires returned by second lieutenants were reviewed carefully in terms of their experience, position and education. This was due to their recent commissioning into the Air Force and limited time as Air Force public affairs officers. A few senior officers with limited practitioner experience were present due to recent cross training. However, these cases were the exceptions and after review were either rejected or included in the final analysis.

The sample was limited to military officers. This research focused on practitioners who served as deputy chiefs (with the rank of first lieutenant and above) at the base level, or higher positions of responsibility in the public affairs career field. Civilian practitioners working for the Air Force were not examined in this study.

This study focused on military practitioners who are professional military officers first and foremost. They are reassigned to stateside and overseas bases, faced with different publics, cultures, environments, situations and commanders every three to four years. They must follow and carry out the orders of commanding officers and are governed by military laws that do not apply to civilians. These organizational constraints

must be followed by military practitioners while trying to enhance their military, career and professional goals. Some of these constraints do not apply to civilian practitioners.

PROCEDURE

Once the questionnaire was finalized and the research sample selected, 277 questionnaires were mailed to Air Force public affairs officers. A cover letter was included introducing myself: an Air Force public affairs officer and graduate student at the University of Maryland. The purpose of the study was explained along with how respondents were selected and the importance and value of their cooperation. The letter stated clearly that the research had been approved and supported by the: Director of Air Force Public Affairs, Air Force Military Personnel Center, Air Force Institute of Technology Civilian Institutions Program, and the University of Maryland.

To encourage participation I included a separate letter from the Director of Air Force Public Affairs personally asking the officers to support my research. Respondents were told that their participation was strictly on a voluntary basis. I believe my affiliation

with the respondents as a fellow public affairs officer coupled with the letter from the Director increased the final response rate, without biasing the results.

Additionally, I offered to send a copy of the final thesis abstract. My telephone number was included so respondents could contact me if they had any questions. Surprisingly, I did receive a number of calls from officers interested in the outcome, the literature reviewed, and current public relations theories.

A self-addressed envelope was enclosed so respondents could return the completed questionnaire with minimal inconvenience. To monitor the returns, each envelope was coded and tracked on a return-rate graph. This provided a close and accurate record of returned questionnaires. The graph also helped identify respondents who did not participate.

Methodological literature suggests that follow-up mailings are an effective method for increasing return rates in mail surveys (Babbie, 1989). However, a successful response rate after the first mailing eliminated the need for follow up mailings. The response rate goal was 60 to 70 percent. The final response rate was 68%. Out of the 277 questionnaires mailed, 187 were returned, 175 were successfully completed and coded, and 11 were not acceptable.

DATA ANALYSIS

The identification number from each returned envelope was entered on the return-rate graph. The questionnaires were checked for accuracy and completeness. All useable questionnaires were hand coded. Data responses were entered into a personal computer and analyzed using the SPSS/PC+ Studentware program.

Response frequencies, means, and standard deviations were generated to determine which models appeared the most. Total mean scores were generated for analysis, and correlations calculated between the models, management schema for public relations and public relations education and experience.

Based on the results of the data analysis, conclusions were drawn to support or refute the research hypothesis and answer the research questions. The final data analysis also would produce results that could possibly reveal how education and management's schema for public relations influences the model used by Air Force practitioners. The research data also could reveal how Air Force practitioners manage public affairs programs, historically or strategically.

LIMITATIONS

The most immediate limitation of the proposed study was getting approval from the Air Force. Before contacting any military personnel, the entire research proposal had to be submitted for approval to the Air Force Institute of Technology's Civilian Institution Program (the department directly responsible for Air Force graduate programs), Air Force Military Personnel Center, and the Director of Air Force Public Affairs. Studying at the University of Maryland with its close proximity to the Pentagon was a major advantage along with the contacts developed during the research phase of the proposed study.

Another limitation was my role as a researcher and Air Force public affairs officer. The possibility existed to unconsciously bias the research. Although every effort was made to concentrate on my role as a researcher, I trusted the judgement of my advisor and committee members in terms of maintaining an acceptable level of objectivity.

Additional concerns were the sample selection and response rates. A number of public affairs officers were assigned to special duty and overseas assignments. Furthermore, some officers were not working in public affairs positions (i.e. recruiting, military academic instructors or attending school). Those assigned overseas presented a week delay in mailing procedures. Therefore, I gave them a return deadline one week later than officers assigned in the states. This could have significantly reduced the final sample size. There also was a concern for the small number of senior officers in the career field and large number of junior officers. Early separations and retirements limited the number of senior public affairs officers available.

Another problem was military personnel constantly being reassigned throughout their careers. Some respondents had just arrived at a new assignment.

Consequently, it was difficult for them to accurately answer the questionnaire as it related to their new organization. Surprisingly, a few of the officers stated this and graciously completed the questionnaire based on their experiences at their previous assignment. Conversely, some were leaving the base and had other pressing issues. I am grateful to those who delegated the responsibility of completing the questionnaire to another public affairs officer in their office.

A major obstacle did develop that could not have been predicted or anticipated. One week after I mailed out the questionnaires a major international crisis erupted in the Middle East, which involved the United States armed forces. Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait. This international crisis mobilized a significant number of military organizations into wartime preparations. Consequently, a number of Air Force public affairs officers selected to participate in my research were either deployed to the Middle East or involved with local agendas related to the crisis. Understandably, my survey was not a high priority. Fortunately, an acceptable number of questionnaires were completed and returned.

Thanks to the support from the Director of Air Force Public Affairs and cooperation from officers in the field, the research was successfully conducted. The results will be submitted to the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs as an updated research project describing Air Force public affairs officers, their education level, experience, behavior, management style. Conclusions can contribute to the public relations body of knowledge, civilian and military academic training programs, and future research of military practitioners.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The final analysis was based on the responses of 175 Air Force public affairs officers. The final response rate was 68%. This included officers stationed in Saudi Arabia (deployed during Operation Desert Shield), the European and Pacific theatres, and throughout the United States. This chapter will discuss the research findings and address the proposed hypothesis and research questions.

HYP: The most common model of public relations used in the Air Force is public information.

RQ 1: How do education and management's schema for public relations influence the model used by Air Force practitioners?

RQ 2: Are Air Force public affairs programs managed strategically or historically?

RQ 3: Do Air Force practitioners have the public relations education required to practice the two-way models?

RQ 4: Do Air Force public affairs programs have the characteristics of excellent public relations programs?

A profile of the typical public affairs officer participating in this research would be: a male Captain, who was the Chief of Public Affairs at an Air Force Base. He has anywhere from five to ten years of experience in Air Force public affairs and an undergraduate degree in journalism. He has completed the Department of Defense's Public Affairs Officers course and the Air Force's Public Affairs Short course. He also has earned a master's degree, although not necessarily in public relations.

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Most of the respondents sampled were Captains, 46%. As expected, the number of second lieutenants identified (2) were statistically insignificant. Male public affairs officers, 73%, were a majority. Only 6% of the officers had received their undergraduate degree in public relations.

In terms of experience, 38% of the officers had practiced public affairs in the Air Force for 11 to 19 years; 31% had five to ten years of experience, and 15% had been Air Force public affairs officers for more than twenty years. Of the 175 officers surveyed, 82% had

completed DINFOS's Public Affairs Officers course. See

Table 1 for general demographic information.

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS ON AIR FORCE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

SEX		TOTAL		MILITARY RANK		TOTAL
Male	73%	(128)		Captain	46%	(80)
Female	27%	(47)		Major	18%	(31)
				Lt Colonel	17%	(29)
				Colonel	11%	(19)
				1st Lt	8%	(14)
				2d Lt	1%	(2)

TITLE		TOTAL
Chief	42%	(74)
Director	31%	(55)
Staff Officer	20%	(35)
Deputy Chief	5%	(11)

MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

To determine which public relations model was most common in Air Force public affairs, mean scores were calculated for each descriptive statement. Tables 2 and 4 show the mean scores recorded by the participating officers. Table 2 shows the officers' mean scores for questions that described the different ways in which their public affairs program could be conducted. Table 2 also reveals the mean scores for how the officers believed their commanders perceived public affairs, better known as the commander's schema for public affairs. It is important to understand that these responses are the participating public affairs officers perceptions of their commander's schema for public relations, and not the commander's actual schema. Table 3 shows the mean scores for knowledge and expertise required to perform public relations tasks related to the four models.

In order to make the scales easier to interpret the scores were reversed. They will be discussed throughout the text as follows. A score of "4" states that the officer strongly agreed with the statement, "3" states that they agreed, "2" states that respondents believed the statement was neither true nor false. A score of "1"

states that the officers disagreed and a score of "0" states that the officers strongly disagreed with the statement.

The mean scores, when comparing the models and Air Force public affairs programs, did not reveal a dominant model. Overall, the scores were close in range. (See Table 2). The highest mean score recorded was the two-way symmetrical model, 2.09 -the only score at or above the midpoint (2.0) of the scale. Press agentry, 1.86, and public information, 1.78, had scores below the midpoint of the scale, although they were higher than the score for the two-way asymmetrical model, 1.49. The data suggested that the two-way symmetrical model is the most common model of public relations in Air Force public affairs.

To test for significance between the mean scores of the four models, paired T-test's were generated for each section. (See Table 2 for mean scores). All but one of the paired models 2-tail probability scores were well below the standard .05 benchmark for significance. The data showed that there was not a significant difference between press agentry and public information. The paired press agentry and public information models' 2-tail probability score for the section that described public

affairs programs and the models was .187. Similar results occurred in section B, commander's schema for public affairs. Again, press agentry and public information were not significantly different. In addition, the 2-tail probability score (.10) for the paired two-way asymmetric and symmetric models was above .05. See Table 2 for mean scores.

There seemed to be evidence that Air Force public affairs officers were in agreement with the characteristics of the two-way symmetrical model. This supports Van Dyke's (1989) study of 45 Navy public affairs officers. He concluded that the officers favored the two-way symmetrical model. However, Van Dyke's performance data led him to conclude that the surveyed Navy public affairs officers were actually using the public information model. There seems to be a similar occurrence in this study of Air Force public affairs officers. This reoccurring pattern will be discussed later in this chapter.

TABLE 2

**AVERAGE MEAN SCORES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS
AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS
AND PRACTITIONERS PERCEPTION OF THE COMMANDER'S SCHEMA**

PRESS AGENTRY MODEL	MEANS	
	AF PROGRAMS	CCs SCHEMA
Purpose of public affairs is to get publicity.	1.82	2.44
We attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and keep unfavorable publicity out.	2.61	3.11
The success of a program is determined by the number of people who attended an event.	2.27	2.71
Public affairs and publicity are the same.	.72	2.11
TOTAL	1.86 [1]	2.60 [2]

[1] This mean is significantly different from the means for the two-way asymmetric and symmetric model at the .01 level. It does not differ significantly from the mean for the public information model.

[2] This mean is significantly different from the means for the public information, two-way asymmetric and symmetric models at the .01 level

(Table 2 continued)

PUBLIC INFORMATION MODEL   **MEANS**

                                                    AF PROGRAMS   CCs SCHEMA

Everyone is so busy writing
news stories or producing
publications there is no time
for research.   2.35   1.86

We disseminate accurate information
but do not volunteer unfavorable
information.   2.21   2.91

Keeping a clipping file is the only
way to determine the success of
public affairs.   1.16   1.57

Public Affairs is more of a neutral
disseminator of information than an
advocate for the organization or a
mediator between management and
publics.   1.39   1.55

                                                         3   4
                                      TOTAL   1 78   1.97

3
 This mean is significantly different from the means for
 the two-way asymmetric and symmetric models at the .01
 level. It does not differ significantly for the press
 agentry model.

4
 This mean is significantly different from the means for
 the press agent, two-way asymmetric and symmetric models

 at the .01 level.

(Table 2 continued)

TWO-WAY ASYMMETRICAL MODEL   **MEAN**

                                    AF PROGRAMS   CCs SCHEMA

After completing a program, we
did research to determine how
effective it had been in changing
people's attitudes.   1.44   2.08

Our broad goal is to persuade
publics to behave as the
organization wants them to behave.   1.65   2.65

Before starting a program, we look at
attitude surveys to make sure we
describe the organization and its
policies in ways our publics would
accept.   1.43   2.10

Before beginning a public affairs
program, we do research to determine
public attitudes toward the
organization and how they might
be changed.   1.43   2.19

                                            5   6
                        TOTAL   1.49   2.26

[5]
This mean is significantly different from the means for
the press agent, public information and two-way

symmetric models at the .01 level.

[6]
This mean is significantly different from the press

agent and public information models at the .01 level.
It does not differ significantly for the two-way

symmetric model.

74

(Table 2 continued)

TWO-WAY SYMMETRIC MODEL   **MEAN**

                                                              AF PROGRAMS   CCs SCHEMA

The purpose of public affairs is to
develop mutual understanding between
the commanders of the organization
and publics the organization affects.   3.22   2.98

We do surveys or informal research tc
find out how much management and
publics understood each other.   1.59   2.09

The purpose of public affairs is to
change the attitudes and behavior of
commanders as much as it is to change
the attitudes and behavior of publics.   1.69   1.41

The organization believes public
affairs should provide mediation for the
organization to help commanders and
publics negotiate conflict.   1.90   2.21

N = 175

                                                     7   8
                                TOTAL   2.09   2.17
7
  This mean is significantly different from the means for
  the press agent, public information and two-way

  asymmetric models at the .01 level.

8
  This mean is significantly different from the press

  agent and public information models at the .01 level.
  It does not differ significantly for the two-way

  asymmetrical model.

PRACTITIONERS PERCEPTION OF COMMANDER'S SCHEMA

Only 41% of the commanders had received formal public relations training, but 34% of those commanders had completed the Air Force's public affairs seminar for commanders. Additionally, 88% of the officers sampled believed their commander understood the role of public affairs. When the responses were analyzed for the practitioner's perception of the commander's schema for public affairs, shown in Table 2, the highest mean score was the press agentry model, 2.60. The lowest mean score was the public information model, 1.97. The mean scores for the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models were 2.26 and 2.17, respectively.

The data analyzed suggested that the surveyed officers believed their commanders' perception of public affairs was more accurately described by the press agentry model and least by the public information model. The practitioners believed their programs were best described by the two-way symmetric model and least by the two-way asymmetric model. This difference in opinions, or perceptions, could be explained by the favorable publicity the organization generated or received when the press agentry model is used.

Commanders are usually pleased and full of pride when their organization attracts positive media attention. It could be possible that Air Force practitioners believed their commanders paid more attention to the public affairs department, and their individual job performances, when they generated positive coverage for the organization. This perception could persuade public affairs officers to employ the press agentry model to generate favorable attention to their office and the organization.

The responses of the practitioners suggested that their public affairs responsibilities and skills extend beyond creating and attracting media attention. They seemed to understand that they must develop mutual understanding between their commanders, their organization and their publics. Commanders can influence the actions and decisions of practitioners simply because they write their performance reviews and recommend them for promotions and new assignments. I believe that Air Force practitioners must be aware of their commanders likes and dislikes and adjust their public relations behavior accordingly. Consequently, there will be times when they might practice the seemingly favored press agentry or public information model instead of the two-way symmetric model.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) predicted that management's schema of public relations would dictate how the organization practices public relations. This would imply that Air Force programs would practice the press agentry model, because Air Force commanders seem to favor this model. The data revealed that the press agentry model had the second highest mean score. This gives credence to J. Grunig and L. Grunig's prediction.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL LEVEL OF AIR FORCE PRACTITIONERS

Public relations knowledge and skill level were measured as they related to the four models and are shown in Table 3. The highest mean score was the public information model, 3.47, which also was the highest total mean score for all three sections. This score provided the strongest support for the research hypothesis. Essentially, it states that the officers believed that they had the knowledge and skills required to employ the public information model. The total mean score for the press agentry, 3.04, also was moderately high.

Table 2, which measured how Air Force public affairs programs were conducted, and Table 3, which measured the knowledge and skills presented in Air Force public affairs offices were specifically designed to address the

research hypothesis. Based on the resulting data, there was not enough convincing evidence to support or refute the research hypothesis. Air Force practitioners seemed to have the knowledge and skills required to practice the press agentry and public information models, but believed the two-way symmetrical model described their programs.

TABLE 3

PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS AND KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS PRESENT IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES

PRESS AGENTRY MODEL	MEAN
Convince a reporter to publicize your organization.	3.19
Get your organization's name into the media.	3.36
Keep bad publicity out of the media.	2.50
Get maximum publicity from a staged event.	3.11
**TOTAL **	**3.04**

PUBLIC INFORMATION MODEL	
Provide objective information about the organization.	3.54
Understand the news value of journalists.	3.49
Prepare news stories that reporters will use.	3.39
Perform as journalists inside your organization.	3.49
**TOTAL **	**3.47**

(Table 3 continued)

TWO-WAY ASYMMETRICAL MODEL   MEAN

Get publics to behave as your organization wants.   2.02

Use attitude theory in a campaign.   1.79

Manipulate publics scientifically.   1.50

Persuade public that your organization is right on
an issue.   2.85

                                            TOTAL ** 2.04

TWO-WAY SYMMETRICAL MODEL

Determine how publics react to the organization.   2.52

Negotiate with an activist group.   2.19

Use theories of conflict resc tion in dealing with
publics.   2.21

Help management to understand the opinion of
particular publics.   3.09

                                      TOTAL ** 2.50

N = 175

* p < .05
** p < .01

80

The mean score for the public information model in Table 2, 1.78, does not stand out from the remaining three models. Public information is not the most common model in Air Force public affairs. The officers were more supportive of the two-way symmetrical, 2.09, and the press agentry models, 1.86. The mean scores for Table 3 revealed more conclusive data. Across the board, the scores for each model were higher in Table 3, which measured knowledge and skill levels, than the scores revealed in Table 2, which identified characteristics of the four models in public affairs programs. The officers believed that they had the required knowledge and skills to practice the public information, 3.47, and press agentry 3.04, models. (See Table 3.)

The mean score recorded in Table 2 for question five, 3.22, which described the two-way symmetrical model was the highest score out of the 16 items. The question stated: The purpose of public affairs is to develop mutual understanding between the commanders of the organization and publics the organization affects. This high score suggests that Air Force public affairs officers agree with the goals of two-way symmetrical

public relations. However, the remaining mean scores were all lower than three. (See Table 2). This suggests that the officers did not feel the statement was an accurate reflection of their public affairs programs. This could lead to the conclusion that Air Force practitioners concur with the goals and objectives of the two-way symmetrical model, but do not practice or agree with the described two-way symmetrical techniques.

The high mean scores recorded for the press agentry and public information models could provide an explanation for this occurrence. It is possible that Air Force public affairs officers understand and support the goals of two-way symmetrical public relations, but tend to employ techniques affiliated with the press agentry and public information models to achieve two-way symmetrical goals. This explanation is supported by J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) who concluded that a limited number of practitioners actually practice the true intent of the two-way symmetrical model.

The lowest individual mean score in Table 2 was .72, which asked if public affairs and publicity were essentially the same. This low score provided evidence that the officers knew the difference between the press

agentry and public information models. This leads to the conclusion that Air Force public affairs officers could be using a combination of the models. Consequently, their practice of mixing models makes it difficult to clearly and confidently identify which individual model is dominant in Air Force public affairs.

Overall, the total mean scores were in the direction I thought it would be. Rarely did the public affairs officers surveyed disagree or strongly disagree with the statements describing various types of public relations behavior and characteristics. These data could support the prediction that the models exist in Air Force public affairs.

PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING AND EDUCATION AND THE MODELS

The four models also were measured by public affairs training and expertise. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the effect of formal public relations training and education on the models used by Air Force practitioners. The results are shown in Table 4.

The two-way symmetrical model produced the highest mean score in each area. Practitioners who had completed the DINFOS course, the Air Force Public Affairs Short course, or received a master's degree favored the two-way symmetrical model. They believed their programs reflected the goals of the two-way symmetrical model. The same group of trained practitioners recorded the lowest mean scores for the two-way asymmetric model: 1.52, 1.55, 1.58, respectively. The mean scores revealed for the press agentry and public information models were consistently lower than 2.00. These results lead one to believe that Air Force practitioners with formal public relations training and education believe their programs resemble the two-way symmetrical model.

TABLE 4

MEAN SCORES FOR THE FOUR MODELS
OF PUBLIC RELATIONS BROKEN DOWN BY
PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

	PRESS AGENT	PUBLIC INFO	2W ASY	2W SYM
DINFOS				
COMPLETED				
N	143	143	143	143
MEAN	1.87	1.78	1.52	2.13
F	.16	.05	1.19	2.25
DID NOT COMPLETE				
N	32	32	32	32
MEAN	1.81	1.75	1.35	1.95
F	.16	.05	1.19	2.25
MASTERS				
COMPLETED				
N	70	70	70	70
MEAN	1.90	1.76	1.58	2.08
F	.43	.05	1.57	.05
DID NOT COMPLETE				
N	105	105	105	105
MEAN	1.83	1.79	1.43	2.10
F	.43	.05	1.57	.05

(Table 4 continued)

	PRESS AGENT	PUBLIC INFO	2W ASY	2W SYM

SHORT COURSE

COMPLETED

N	92	92	92	92
MEAN	1.92	1.74	1.55	2.13
F	1.71	.54	1.16	.84

DID NOT COMPLETE

N	83	83	83	83
MEAN	3.05	1.82	1.42	2.05
F	1.71	.54	1.16	.84

* P < .05
** P < .01

(None of the F values were significant in this table.)

In terms of the expertise and knowledge available in Air Force public affairs offices, the results were similar to the scores previously recorded in Table 4. The officers felt confident that their offices had the knowledge and skills required to practice the public information model. Table 5 shows the responses.

TABLE 5

**PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED FOR
THE FOUR MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
BROKEN DOWN BY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN
AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES**

	PRESS AGENT	PUBLIC INFO	2W ASY	2W SYM
DINFOS				
COMPLETED				
N	143	143	143	143
MEAN	3.06	3.49	2.05	2.52
F	.64	.77	.29	.67
DID NOT COMPLETE				
N	32	32	32	32
MEAN	2.97	3.41	1.98	2.40
F	.64	.77	.29	.67
MASTERS				
COMPLETED				
N	70	70	70	70
MEAN	3.00	3.49	2.11	2.55
F	.76	.11	1.19	.50
DID NOT COMPLETE				
N	105	105	105	105
MEAN	3.08	3.41	1.99	2.46
F	.76	.11	1.19	.50

(Table 5 continued)

	PRESS AGENT	PUBLIC INFO	2W ASY	2W SYM

SHORT COURSE

  COMPLETED

N	92	92	92	92
MEAN	3.05	3.49	2.11	2.54
F	.00 **	.12	2.13	.57

DID NOT COMPLETE

N	83	83	83	83
MEAN	3.04	3.46	1.95	2.45
F	.00 **	.12	2.13	.57

  * P < .05
** P < .01

The mean scores recorded for the public information model, 3.49, were identical for officers who completed each of the three academic programs. Again, the public information and press agentry models produced the highest scores. This suggested that Air Force practitioners with formal public relations training employed press agentry and public information techniques, despite their advanced training and potential to utilize two-way symmetrical techniques. It could also imply that respondents had two-way symmetrical goals, but lacked the knowledge to implement the model into their programs.

The two-way asymmetrical model produced the lowest mean scores: DINFOS -2.05; MASTERS - 2.11; Short Course - 2.11. This suggested that Air Force practitioners were not as confident with their public affairs skills and knowledge as it related to practicing the two-way asymmetrical model. Based on the data collected, one could conclude that, regardless of the amount or type of formal public relations training and education acquired, Air Force public affairs officers were more likely to employ press agentry and public information techniques. Furthermore, the data suggested that they do not believe the goals, objectives or techniques of the two-way

asymmetrical model characterized Air Force public affairs
programs.

COMMANDER'S SCHEMA AND THE FOUR MODELS

The mean scores recorded for the commander's schema
for public affairs and its effect on the models also was
measured (See Table 6). The results suggested that
commanders who did not understand the role of public
relations within the organization favored the press
agentry model, 3.35, followed by public information,
2.65.

TABLE 6

COMMANDER'S SCHEMA FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND THE FOUR MODELS

MODELS	UNDERSTANDS PA	(F)	DOES NOT UNDERSTAND
PA	2.50	8.28 **	3.35
PI	1.88	15.89 **	2.65
2A	2.27	.36	2.14
2S	2.27	.36	2.14

MODELS	SEEKS ADVICE	(F)	DOES NOT SEEK ADVICE
PA	2.34	8.89 **	3.52
PI	1.81	7.44 **	2.54
2A	2.26	3.91 *	1.75
2S	2.26	3.91 *	1.75

* p < .05   N = 175
** P < .01

Commanders who understood the role of public affairs were more supportive of the press agentry model, mean score 2.50. The scores for the two-way models were the same, 2.27. In this instance, commanders who understood the role of public affairs were not very supportive of the public information model, which had a mean score of 1.88.

In both cases, the significance level for the press agentry and public information models was less than .01, which suggests there is a relationship between the models and commander's schema for public affairs. There also seemed to be slightly more support for the two-way models from the commanders who understood the role of public relations.

The data suggested that commanders who seek the advice of their public affairs officer favored the two-way asymmetrical, 2.26, and symmetrical models, 2.26. Commanders who do not seek advice seemed to favor the press agentry, 3.52, and public information, 2.54, models. Compared to their counterparts, these commanders were least supportive of the two-way models, which had identical scores, 1.75. Additionally, each mean score produced significance levels below .05, which suggests

there is a relationship between the models employed by Air Force public affairs officers and their commander's schema.

Commanders who did not understand the role of public affairs or seek the advice of their public affairs officer showed strong favoritism toward the press agentry and public information models. The data suggested that Air Force commanders who did not understand the role of public affairs or seek public affairs advice could encourage the use of the press agentry and public information models instead of the two-way asymmetric and symmetric models.

These research data could provide a possible explanation for Air Force practitioners tendency to employ press agentry and public information techniques, while attempting to achieve two-way symmetrical goals and objectives. They seemed to have the formal public relations education and training required to practice each of the four models, with some degree of confidence. However, the data suggested that Air Force practitioners were most confident employing the public information model, yet they felt their commanders favored the press agentry model. Although Air Force public affairs

officers believed their programs are best described by the two-way symmetrical model, the research revealed that their techniques and commander's schema for public affairs clearly supported the press agentry and public information models. Furthermore, whether the practitioners believed their commanders did or did not understand the role of public affairs did not seem to affect their perceptions of commanders preference for the press agent model. Simply stated, Air Force public affairs officers believed commanders felt public affairs was best described by the press agentry model. The practitioners believed the two-way symmetrical model described their public affairs programs.

HISTORICAL VERSUS STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

In order to determine how Air Force programs were managed, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements that described strategic or historical management techniques. Table 7 shows the mean scores.

Overall, Air Force public affairs officers scored highest on the strategic management statements, 2.62. Their scores for the historical management statements were slightly lower, 2.36. These scores suggest that Air

Force programs were managed strategically, rather than historically. I also found that Air Force practitioners managed their programs strategically throughout their rank structure and at each level of experience. (See Table 8 for scores).

TABLE 7

STRATEGIC -VS- HISTORICAL MANAGEMENT
AND AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	MEAN
Committees or other formal mechanisms are used to track issues.	2.45
Public Affairs programs are developed to deal with a specific issue or set of related issues.	3.03
New techniques and methods are considered when developing public affairs programs.	2.90
We started public affairs programs after strategic planning showed the public could hurt or help the organization.	2.10
TOTAL	2.62

HISTORICAL MANAGEMENT	
Tradition and precedent are important to public affairs programs.	2.39
Public affairs programs stick with procedures that have worked in the past.	2.61
We continue public affairs programs because we have had them for many years.	2.08
TOTAL	2.36

TABLE 8

MEAN SCORES FOR HISTORICAL AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
BY RANK AND EXPERIENCE

RANK	HISTORICAL MNGT	STRATEGIC MNGT
2Lt	1.50	3.00
1Lt	2.29	2.50
Captain	2.34	2.61
Major	2.34	2.63
Lt Col	2.64	2.51
Colonel	2.18	2.86
	$F = 1.37$	$F = .94$

EXPERIENCE	HISTORICAL MNGT	STRATEGIC MNGT
Less 2 Years	2.25	2.50
2-4 Years	2.29	2.77
5-10 Years	2.28	2.55
11-19 Years	2.41	2.64
Over 20 Years	2.50	2.62
	$F = .43$	$F = .58$

$N = 175$

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

The research data provided evidence that Air Force public affairs programs are not routine, institutionalized programs that represent the practice of closed-system public relations, as described by Broom (1986). As previously described in chapter 2, Pfeffer (1978) attributed change within a historically managed organization to a change in overall management. Air Force programs supported this theory because commanders and public affairs officers are reassigned to new organizations every three to four years. One could conclude that the constant reassignment of commanders and public affairs officers affected the way Air Force programs were managed.

As a result of the military reassignment process, commanders presented new agendas to the organization that forced incumbent public affairs officers to establish new goals and objectives that supported the new commanders' agenda. This constant rotation of management seemed to defy the infinite loop process of historically managed programs described by Stinchomb (1968). Unlike corporate or private organizations where management and practitioners are employed for an extended period of time by the same organization, Air Force commanders and public

affairs officers rarely stayed in one organization beyond four years. This fact alone made it difficult to manage programs in a purely historical manner.

PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

J. Grunig (1990c) claimed that research is a significant part of strategic management. Therefore, in addition to measuring management techniques, this study identified the type of research methods present in Air Force programs. Air Force practitioners were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements that described two forms of research and evaluation: Informal or seat-of-the-pants and formal or scientific research. Table 9 shows the mean scores.

Dozier (1987) described seat-of-the-pants research as subjective, informal techniques used for evaluating the preparation, implementation and impact of techniques used for public relations programs. The mean score for seat-of-the-pants research was 2.88, which suggests Air Force practitioners tended to favor informal research techniques.

Environmental scanning, a formal research technique, involves monitoring the environment and the mass media to measure effectiveness of messages produced by the organization (Dozier, 1987). It also alerts the organization to turbulence or change in the environment that might affect the survival or growth of the organization. The mean score recorded for environmental scanning was 2.37. Another formal research method used in strategic management is scientific evaluation. The mean score for scientific evaluation was 1.75. These scores suggested that in Air Force programs, formal research techniques were not used as frequently as informal, seat-of-the-pants research techniques.

Identifying problems was measured because it also is a part of strategic management. (See Table 9) The mean score for this item was 2.61. This score represented the officers' agreement with the statements. Air Force practitioners believed that they had the ability to identify problems and issues, and develop programs to communicate with specific publics. Informal research techniques seemed to be present in Air Force programs. The data revealed evidence that suggested Air Force officers used seat-of-the-pants research to manage their public affairs programs strategically.

TABLE 9

FORMAL VERSUS INFORMAL RESEARCH AND
AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING	MEAN
Conducted depth interviews with members of the organization's publics.	1.72
After conducting special events, people are called back to get their reactions.	1.95
Public affairs officers talk with field personnel to find out about key publics.	2.85
Complaints are reviewed to find out how publics feel about the organization.	2.42
TOTAL	2.37

SCIENTIFIC SCANNING	
Conducted communication or public affairs audits to find out about publics.	1.53
The communication effectiveness of public affairs is measured by comparing before-program and after-program measures of publics.	1.97
TOTAL	1.75

(TABLE 9 continued)

SEAT-OF-THE-PANTS

Personnel check the impact of public affairs by
keeping their eyes and ears open to the reactions
of their personal and public contacts.   3.28

Personnel working in public affairs prepare
communications by drawing on their own professional
experience.   3.30

The impact of public affairs is checked by having
personnel attend meetings and hearings of groups
representative of key publics.   2.51

Personnel working in public affairs can tell how
effective programs are by their own gut-level
reactions and those of other communicators.   2.42

                                           TOTAL   2.88

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

Reviewed management decisions to identify public
reactions to problems.   2.83

Identified a public affairs problem by reviewing
the extent to which the organization has been
socially responsible.   2.39

                                           TOTAL   2.61

FORMAL PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1989) claimed that formal public relations training and education could influence the model used by practitioners. They also suggest that practicing the more advanced two-way models would be limited to those practitioners with specialized public relations training. Data collected for this research suggested that a significant number of Air Force public affairs officers have acquired the prescribed public relations education and training needed to practice the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models.

Surprisingly, only ten of the 175 surveyed officers had received their undergraduate degree in public relations. Journalism, 29%, was the most common response for communication majors. The most popular answer was "other," which included degrees in history, political science, English, and education. Table 10 shows the distribution of the respondents' undergraduate degrees, and formal public affairs training and education.

Despite the small number of officers with undergraduate degrees in public relations, there seemed to be a significant - and respectable - amount of public affairs training acquired by Air Force practitioners.

More than half, 82%, of the officers surveyed completed the Department of Defense's Public Affairs Officers course; 53% graduated from the Air Force's Public Affairs Short Course, which was taught by civilian professors at Boston University and the University of Oklahoma.

In terms of advanced academic degrees, Air Force practitioners were well qualified: 40% of the officers surveyed had received their master's degree in public relations, and 26% had taken college level public relations courses. Overall, Air Force practitioners seemed to have acquired a substantial amount of formal public relations training from military and civilian institutions.

The data provided enough convincing evidence to conclude that Air Force public affairs officers had the formal public relations education and training required to practice the sophisticated two-way models. This conclusion supports Van Dyke's (1989) claim that military practitioners -in this instance Air Force practitioners- possess the education and skills required to practice the two-way models. However, regardless of the amount of public relations education and training acquired, the research data revealed that Air Force practitioners were

more likely to use press agentry and public information techniques to achieve two-way symmetrical goals and objectives.

TABLE 10

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS
PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE		TOTAL
Other	39%	(69)
Journalism	29%	(51)
TV/Radio	13%	(22)
Mass Comm	9%	(16)
Public Relations	6%	(10)
Advertising	4%	(7)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING AND EDUCATION	TOTAL	
DINFOS Public Affairs Officers Course	82%	(143)
Air Force Public Affairs Short Course	53%	(92)
Master's Degree	40%	(70)
DINFOS Sr Public Affairs Officers seminar	29%	(50)
Some college courses	26%	(45)

N = 175

Overall, the data recorded throughout the research seemed to support conclusions of previous research (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; E. Pollack, 1984; R. Pollack, 1986) that the model used most frequently by government practitioners is public information. Although there

seemed to be a pattern that partially supports the research hypothesis, the data collected in this research alone does not provide sufficient evidence to fully support the hypothesis.

It is important to acknowledge that Air Force practitioners not only agree with the goals and objectives of the two-way symmetrical model but also have the formal training and education to employ the model in Air Force programs. However, as previously shown in Tables 4 and 5, Air Force public affairs officers practiced and seemed to prefer the press agentry and public information models. Regardless of the amount of public relations training they received, present day Air Force public affairs offices are best prepared and trained to practice press agentry and public information.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Finally, this study proposed the research question: Do Air Force public affairs programs have the characteristics of excellent public relations programs, as described by the IABC research team. See Figure 1 for a complete listing. As previously stated in chapter 2,

this study only examined characteristics at the micro and meso levels.

Each of the characteristics of excellence contribute to the theory of excellence in public relations. However, the time required to measure each of the characteristics is beyond the scope and constraints of this study. As stated earlier in chapter 2, this study focused on characteristics at the micro and meso level. I isolated a few of the more critical characteristics that were relevant to the purpose of this study. The characteristics addressed related two-way symmetric communication, public relations education and how Air Force programs are managed.

The purpose of this research was to determine if the following characteristics of excellence were present: Are Air Force programs managed strategically or historically; is the two-way symmetrical model present; are Air Force practitioners aware of the symmetrical model; and does the commander's schema for public affairs in the Air Force reflect the two-way symmetrical model. I believed researching these characteristics in Air Force public affairs would assist me in developing support for my hypothesis and answers for my research questions.

As revealed earlier in this chapter, the data analyzed confirmed the prediction that Air Force public affairs programs were managed strategically. Tables 7 and 8 revealed evidence that supported this conclusion. There also seemed to be evidence that Air Force public affairs officers were both knowledgeable and conscious of the goals and objectives of the two-way symmetrical model. They had an average mean score of 3.22 (4= strongly agree, 0= strongly disagree) when asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the goal of the two-way symmetrical model, question #5. Air Force practitioners also believed their public affairs programs represented the characteristics of the two-way symmetrical model, reference Table 2. However, a closer examination of the data suggested that Air Force practitioners used press agentry and public information techniques to achieve two-way symmetrical goals.

When asked which model they believed they possessed the knowledge and skills to practice, Air Force practitioners overwhelmingly agreed with the public information, mean score 3.47, and press agentry, mean score 3.04, models. Additionally, the highest mean scores recorded in Table 2, which described

characteristics of all four models, were for the press agentry and public information models. See Table 2 for individual model questions. This pattern suggested that Air Force public affairs officers were actually practicing a combination of the press agentry and public information models.

One could challenge a claim that the two-way symmetrical model is practiced in Air Force programs. Therefore, I conclude that there is a realistic possibility that the two-way symmetrical model is present in Air Force public affairs. One of the strongest indicators of its presence is the public relations education acquired by Air Force public affairs officers and their support of the ideas and purposes of the two-way symmetrical model.

The data revealed in this research suggested that Air Force public affairs officers had the potential to practice excellent public relations. The respondents seemed to possess a significant amount of formal military and civilian academic training in public relations. This suggested that Air Force practitioners were knowledgeable and familiar with the goals and objectives of the two-way symmetrical model. Each of these characteristics,

academic training and knowledge of the two-way symmetrical model, were described as indicators for excellence by the IABC research team.

One characteristic that could not be fully supported was the commander's schema for public affairs. The data suggested that Air Force practitioners perceptions of their commander's schema did not always agree with the two-way symmetrical model. The data revealed a belief among Air Force practitioners that commanders favored the press agentry model. This held true whether the officers believed their commanders did or did not understand the role of public affairs. Another finding was the limited use of formal research techniques in Air Force programs. The absence of scientific research, which also is an important function of strategic management, highlights the limited use of the two-way symmetrical model.

The research data revealed that all but two (presence of the two-way symmetrical model and commander's schema for public affairs reflecting the two-way symmetrical model) of the characteristics of excellence addressed in this study were present in

Air Force programs. Therefore, it is appropriate to conclude that Air Force public affairs programs do possess some of the characteristics of excellent public relations programs; but seem to be missing one of the most distinctive characteristics of excellence, the actual use of techniques of two-way symmetrical communication.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although this study did not produce enough evidence to support the proposed hypothesis, the most common model of public relations used in the Air Force is public information, it did provide answers to the research questions. The public information model was not the most common model of public relations used in Air Force public affairs programs. Air Force practitioners felt that their public affairs programs were best characterized by the two-way symmetrical model. However, in terms of the knowledge and skills needed to practice each of the models, Air Force public affairs officers favored the public information and press agentry models.

Air Force public affairs officers practiced a combination of the public relations models. The data analyzed in this study led me to conclude that they used press agentry and public information techniques in an attempt to achieve two-way symmetrical goals. Although Air Force practitioners seemed to have received formal public relations education and training prescribed to practice the two-way symmetrical model, the majority of them actually practice the press agent and public information models.

The data suggested that regardless of the amount of training and education acquired by Air Force practitioners, they were best prepared to use public information and press agent techniques. The resources and personnel available in Air Force public affairs offices seemed most supportive of the public information model. Furthermore, practitioners believed that commanders favored press agent public relations. Although Air Force public affairs officers seemed to agree with the goals of the two-way symmetrical model the data suggested that they are trained to practice press agent and public information public relations.

Generally, Air Force practitioners did not use two-way symmetrical techniques. They seemed to have an interest in practicing two-way symmetrical public relations, but their knowledge, skills and perceptions of their commander's schema limited them to practicing press agent and public information public relations. One way to prepare Air Force practitioners with the necessary skills and expertise is to educate them about two-way symmetrical public relations. This could involve incorporating two-way symmetrical theory and techniques in Air Force training programs, such as DINFOS and the Air Force Short course, and sending officers to civilian

schools that teach two-way symmetrical communications. This education and implementation process would have to be accepted by practitioners, supported by commanders and given an adequate time frame to be implemented and evaluated.

I also discovered that Air Force public affairs officers managed their programs strategically. This was accomplished by using informal seat-of-the-pants research methods, and mixing and matching the press agentry and public information models. Their method of practicing strategic management could be considered ineffective by strategic management theorists. It also could be viewed as a power and control situation rather than strategic management.

Commanders seemed to have power and control over practitioners and resources. Therefore, each time new commanders are assigned to military organizations practitioners must adjust their public affairs objectives to support the commander's agenda. This constant "changing of the guard" could interfere with the strategic planning process. A strategic plan developed for old commanders could conflict with the goals and objectives of new commanders. Ultimately, commanders will use their organizational power and control to

establish their agendas and ensure that subordinates understand and support it. This power and control process could explain why Air Force practitioners seemed to rely on their experience and informal gut-instinct research techniques rather than costly and time consuming scientific research methods.

There was a conflict between the practitioners perception of their commander's schema for public affairs and how public affairs officers are trained to practice public relations. Consistently, Air Force practitioners believed their commanders preferred the press agentry model. This could explain why they utilized the press agentry and public information techniques. The efforts of formally trained and educated Air Force practitioners, attempting to practice two-way symmetrical public relations, were restricted by commanders who favor press agentry techniques.

Air Force commanders are usually selected from operational career fields, such as pilots and navigators. Most of the training and education they have received during their career focused on flying and operational functions. As expected, their knowledge and understanding of public affairs and other support related career fields tends to be very limited. However, as

commanders they are put in the position where they must interact with the organization's publics and media. The public affairs training seminars they received during commanders' orientation can not address all the contributions public affairs makes to the overall success of the organization. There are situations when efforts to educate and inform commanders about public affairs are preceded by their past experiences with public affairs personnel, positive and negative, or old war stories their colleagues told them about the media and public affairs. If commanders have had positive public affairs experiences the practitioner has an advantage compared to practitioners who work for commanders who have had bad experiences.

In this rank-conscious authoritarian organization, commanders control the resources, affect careers, and most importantly make final unchallenged decisions. As a result, Air Force practitioners are often forced or restricted from employing two-way symmetrical techniques. This leaves them with no other options other than employing the press agentry and public information models to accomplish their objects, meet organizational goals and serve their commander.

Air Force public affairs officers felt their knowledge and expertise was not being utilized to its fullest potential. Most of the written comments of practitioners stated that the bottom line was pleasing their commander, and getting the job done - by any means necessary. This usually involved responding to and resolving sudden, unplanned organizational problems or crises, which could have been prevented with proper planning and coordination.

A significant number of Air Force practitioners seemed to understand the value and benefits of formal scientific research. They also had received the necessary skills and formal training to conduct and analyze public opinion surveys and implement effective communication programs. Unfortunately, the Air Force is faced with budgetary limitations and is trying to do more with less. Consequently, Air Force practitioners must deal with personnel shortages, financial cutbacks and forced time constraints. Needless to say, these factors affect the amount of resources available and support required to implement and administer time consuming formal research programs.

Air Force public affairs officers chances of using scientific research are also affected by congressional

legislation, such as the Gillette Act. Consequently, they depended heavily on generic, gut-instinct informal type research to guide most of their public affairs programs. At the base level, practitioners utilized seat-of-the-pants research and evaluation. When formal scientific research is utilized in Air Force public affairs, it is primarily at the command and Air Force headquarters level (i.e., the Pentagon).

The unsolicited comments of respondents summarized this lack of formal research quite accurately. Following are some of these comments: "Research is a luxury in today's public affairs world"; "We have neither the charter, nor the budget to engage in opinion surveys or organized research"; "When you're trying to keep up the same level of service despite fewer bodies and more tasks strategic planning takes a back seat to making sure the commander's priorities are satisfied and the paper gets out"; "Although we want to research, evaluate and plan, we spend most of our time putting out brush fires and responding to the commander's requests"; "The resources required to conduct research are simply not available."

Air Force practitioners were very conscious of the limitations they faced from the absence of formal research programs. One practitioner stated that while Air

Force officers may train in formal public relations, the way civilian firms do, they needed to realize that military public relations is its own unusual hybrid and that they needed to work effectively within the limits they had.

Air Force practitioners' potential to practice excellent public relations will remain unfulfilled until formal research methods are practiced at all levels of Air Force public affairs. Although they might have the education and training required to employ the two-way models, Air Force practitioners do not have the resources to conduct scientific research. Consequently, they will continue to employ press agentry and public information techniques because these are the only models they can use effectively with the resources available to them.

The data suggested that Air Force public affairs officers recognized the two-way symmetrical model. However, organizational constraints prevent them from practicing two-way symmetric public relations. Consequently, the actual practice of the two-way symmetrical model was not present in Air Force public affairs. It also was not present in Air Force practitioner's perceptions of their commander's schema for public affairs.

In order for Air Force public affairs programs to achieve excellence in public relations, as defined by the IABC research team, they need to accomplish the following steps. First, they must educate commanders about the organizational benefits and value of two-way symmetrical communication. Secondly, they need to implement and endorse formal research programs. This includes financial support to obtain related resources. Hiring local civilian research firms is one possibility. Thirdly, they could use qualitative methods such as focus groups and structured interviews. Fourth, they could teach a DINFOS seminar, similar to the short course, that deals specifically with conducting and applying scientific research to Air Force programs. Finally, they could either teach two-way symmetrical public relations at DINFOS or continue sending officers to schools that teach two-way symmetrical communications.

Persuading Air Force - or military commanders - to support two-way symmetrical public relations would be the most difficult task for Air Force public affairs officers. In most situations the public affairs officer is an advisor to the commander and is outranked by at least two or three military grades.

As explained in Chapter 1, military commanders tend to distrust the media and the exuberant manner by which the media collect information. Previous military commanders did not trust the media and learned some hard lessons about credibility during the Vietnam war. Consequently, they are very conservative and perceived to be withholding information during military briefings.

In fact, there are times when a military spokesperson will withhold information. As explained in Chapter 1, the Air Force and its sister services understand the publics right and need to know. However, they also accept the fact that there are circumstances when it cannot give out information to the general public (AFR 190-1, 1989).

Recently, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of U.S. Central Command and Allied Forces during Operation Desert Storm expressed this conservative pattern in an Washington Post interview during the war with Iraq. He stated, "I would tell you that we are now and we are going to continue to be deliberately conservative in what we tell you and the American people. We don't want a credibility gap to generate. We don't ever want to lead the American people to believe something is going on that isn't going on. Therefore,

we are very, very deliberately making sure that what we provide you is something we can back up if ever challenged" (Anderson & Van Atta, 1991).

During a televised interview General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the highest ranking officer in the Armed Forces, defended the military's dissemination of information during the war with Iraq. He stated that military spokespersons were as truthful as possible within the necessary and reasonable constraints of security. General Powell believed that the public was told what the military could and should tell them, and spokespersons withheld what they could not tell. Statements like these made by influential senior commanders who enforce policies ultimately prevent military practitioners from utilizing the two-way symmetric model.

Here are two four-star generals and commanders at war whom have clearly stated their steadfast and unwavering commitment to the public information model.

Although Air Force public affairs programs did have some of the characteristics of excellence, the ones they did not possess seemed to be the most relevant. The two-way symmetrical model, and it attributes, are vital to the overall theory of excellence in public relations.

A program lacking two-way symmetrical communication would find it extremely challenging to practice excellent public relations, as defined by the IABC research team.

In conclusion, I believe Air Force public affairs programs will continue to use press agentry and public information techniques to achieve two-way symmetrical goals and objectives. I make this prediction based on the results of this research, experience as a public affairs officer, and the recent media attention given to military commanders during the war with Iraq. During daily news briefings and interviews, senior military commanders and public affairs officers utilized public information techniques to keep the public informed.

Despite the continuous cries of censorship from the media, the public seemed to be satisfied with the content, timeliness and quality of information provided by military spokespersons. Therefore, based on the favorable public response and support the military received throughout the Persian Gulf war, I predict future commanders will conduct press conferences and media interviews in a manner similar, if not identical, to General Powell and General Schwarzkopf.

Furthermore, Air Force practitioners will not be able to practice excellent public relations until two-

way symmetrical communications and formal scientific research are implemented throughout Air Force public affairs programs. This can not be achieved until practitioners are given the financial, personnel, training and research resources required to implement two-way symmetrical public relations.

LIMITATIONS

During the research process there were circumstances that occurred that I had no control of and some things I would have done differently. First, when I elected to use a mail questionnaire I had no idea how expensive and time consuming it would be. Fortunately I had the resources, both financial and office equipment, to complete the research. Fees for copying materials, stamps, envelopes, paper and other related miscellaneous items were paid out of my pocket. I did not have unlimited access to an office, and the university was faced with budgetary constraints. This forced me to use the office machines and services of friends as their schedule permitted.

My final research proposal had to be approved by Air Force authorities. I sent the proposal to them with what I thought was enough time to be reviewed and approved.

The proposal was misplaced. When it was found and approved I was behind schedule. Since I was relying on mail questionnaires, it would have been impossible for me to meet the university's academic deadlines.

If you have to get your research approved by your employer be sure to give yourself plenty of time to complete the research before university deadlines pass. Fortunately, my application for an extension was approved.

I wanted to pre-test my questionnaire, but time constraints would not permit. After analyzing the data I felt there were some questions I could have replaced, which would have produced additional information about Air Force public affairs. I also wanted to run the pre-test data through my computer to become familiar with the data and statistical analysis process. Finally, I found that using a personal computer had some limitations, despite the convenience of working at home. The SPSS/PC+ Studentware program was very helpful, but there were some statistical functions that were not included in the program. Pretesting the questionnaire and running the data before I conducted this research would have made me aware of these limitations.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research provided a wealth of information about the experience and education levels of Air Force practitioners and general demographic characteristics of Air Force public affairs. It also presented an analysis of Air Force public affairs and how it related to the four models of public relations. This information can be used by military and civilian scholars for future research, comparative analysis, or as a starting foundation for the development of a fifth public relations model.

Future research on Air Force practitioners should include qualitative research. The research should closely evaluate a few Air Force public affairs officers and programs to compare the results to these findings. The research should include interviews and physical observations of practitioners on how they manage their programs and resources available to them.

A study of the type and quality of Air Force public affairs training programs could be conducted. This could reveal more precisely which model or models of public relations are being taught at DINFOS, the Air Force Short course and the civilian institutions public affairs

officers attend. The research should evaluate the curriculum, teaching materials and other areas related to the program. Finally, research should be conducted to determine how commanders view public relations and which model of public relations they think would be effective.

APPENDIX A

Dear Public Affairs officer:

As a fellow Air Force public affairs officer, I have experienced some of the daily challenges we deal with while supporting organizational missions. Our training, professional standards and managerial skills have made significant contributions to the overall success of our organizations.

Presently, I am an AFIT graduate student at the University of Maryland, College of Journalism. For my thesis, I have decided to examine how Air Force public affairs programs are managed. Current academic research suggests there are identifiable differences between government and private industry practitioners. I believe this research will help us understand how Air Force officers manage and practice public affairs.

You have been selected from a worldwide directory of public affairs officers to contribute your knowledge and experience to this study. In order for the final results to be valid, it would help if _every_ _officer_ _receiving_ _a_ _questionnaire_ _completed_ _and_ _returned_ _it_ _to_ _me_. A self-addressed envelop has been provided to expedite the process. The questionnaire is confidential and your participation is voluntary. The only identification is a coded envelop, which is required to calculate the overall response rate.

If you would like a copy of the final thesis abstract or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-439-7458 or the address listed below.

Thank-you in advance for your cooperation.

TYRONE 'WOODY' WOODYARD, Capt, USAF
AFIT Student, University of Maryland

Authority. 10 U.S.C 8012, Secretary of the Air Force; powers and duties; delegation by; implemented by DOI-12-1. **Purpose**: Public affairs questionnaire. **Routine Uses**: None. Furnishing the information is voluntary and for research purposes.

APPENDIX B

Dear Public Affairs Officers:

Each year several public affairs officers participate in the Air Force Institute of Technology's Civilian Institute Program (perhaps you've done so yourself). While these PAOs benefit individually from the experience, our Air Force and the public affairs career field gain a lot as well.

Captain Woody Woodyard is one of our current AFIT students working on his Master's degree at the University of Maryland. He has developed, under the tutelage of his adviser, Dr. James E. Grunig, a comprehensive study of the way we conduct public relations within the Air Force. In these turbulent times the knowledge we gain from studies like Captain Woodyard's will help us work smarter and better as the Air Force and public affairs grows smaller in the coming years.

Captain Woodyard has asked that I lend my support to his project and I do so because I know the importance of continuing research to our professionalism and our future. Please take a few minutes from your busy schedule to give thoughtful responses to Woody's survey. Your help will be greatly appreciated by him and by me.

Sincerely,

H.E. ROBERTSON
Colonel, USAF
Director of Public Affairs

PUBLIC AFFAIRS QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to determine the type of public affairs practiced in the Air Force. By completing this questionnaire you can help me define the primary goals of Air Force public affairs, and how to achieve these goals.

In this study public affairs is meant to include all types of organizational communication including media relations, internal relations and community relations performed by you, the public affairs officer, or a member of your staff. Questions referring to "The program" means all aspects of your public affairs program.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire uses a numbering system that allows you to choose how much you agree or disagree that a statement describes your public affairs office. Read each statement carefully and record your response in the space provided. Write in "1" if you strongly agree that the statement accurately describes your office, write in "2" if you agree, write in "3" if the statement is neither true nor false (neutral), write in "4" if you disagree, and write in "5" if you strongly disagree.

It is important that you answer every item in the questionnaire. For this questionnaire, "organization" refers to the overall organization.

The following scale should help you. Please refer to it for clarification.

1 = STRONGLY AGREE
2 = AGREE
3 = NEUTRAL
4 = DISAGREE
5 = STRONGLY DISAGREE

RETURN BY 29 NOV 90

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY.

SECTION A

This series of items describes different ways in which public affairs could be conducted. Some of them may describe your public affairs programs. Please use the "1" (strongly agree) through "5" (strongly disagree) numbering system to estimate how well each of the following items describes your programs.

1= STRONGLY AGREE   2= AGREE   3= NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE
4= DISAGREE   5= STRONGLY DISAGREE

1. The purpose of public affairs is to get publicity for the organization.   _____

2. After completing a program, we did research to determine how effective it had been in changing people's attitude.   _____

3. Nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications there is no time to do research.

4. Our broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.   _____

5. The purpose of public affairs is to develop mutual understanding between the commanders of the organization and publics the organization affects.   _____

6. Before starting a public affairs program, we look at attitude surveys to make sure we describe the organization and its policies in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.   _____

7.
We disseminate accurate information but do not volunteer unfavorable information.   _____

8. We do surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understood each other.

9. We mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.   _____

10. Before beginning a public affairs program, we do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might be changed.   _____

11. We determine how successful a program is from the number of people who attended an event. ____

12. Public affairs and publicity mean essentially the same thing. ____

13. The purpose of public affairs is to change the attitudes and behavior of commanders as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.____

14. Keeping a clipping file is about the only way we have to determine the success of public affairs. ____

15. The organization believes public affairs should provide mediation for the organization to help commanders and publics negotiate conflict. ____

16. Public Affairs is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics. ____

SECTION B

Following is a list of activities that can be used in planning and implementing public affairs programs. Choose a number that describes the extent to which each item characterizes how your public affairs programs have been planned and carried out in the last two or three years.

1= STRONGLY AGREE   2= AGREE   3= NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE
4= DISAGREE   5= STRONGLY DISAGREE

17. Reviewed management decisions to identify public relations problems. ____

18. Identified a public affairs problem by reviewing the extent to which the organization has been socially responsible. ____

19. Conducted depth interviews with members of the organization's publics. ____

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20. Conducted communication or public affairs audits to find out about publics. ____

21. After conducting special events, people are called back to get their reaction. ____

22. Public affairs officers talk with field personnel to find out about key publics. ____

23. Complaints are reviewed to find out how publics feel about the organization. ____

24. Committees or other formal mechanisms are used to track issues. ____

25. Public affairs programs are developed to deal with a specific issue or set of related issues. ____

26. Public affairs programs are based on research on the issue and public. ____

27. Public affairs programs are changed every year or two as issues and publics change. ____

28. Programs are developed and reviewed through a formal planning process. ____

29. Management by Objectives (MBO) is used in public affairs. ____

30. At budget time, funding depends on the demonstrated effectiveness of public affairs. ____

31. Public affairs personnel or commanders meet personally with leaders of activist groups. ____

32. Public affairs personnel provide commanders with information gained from public affairs programs. ____

33. Personnel check the impact of public affairs by keeping their eyes and ears open to the reactions of their personal and public contacts. ____

34. Personnel working in public affairs prepare communications by drawing on their own professional experience. ____

35. The communication effectiveness of public affairs is measured by comparing before-program and after-program measures of publics. _____

36. The impact of public affairs is checked by having personnel attend meetings and hearings of groups representative of key publics. _____

37. Personnel working in public affairs can tell how effective programs are by their own gut-level reactions and those of other communicators. _____

38. Tradition and precedent are important to public affairs programs. _____

39. Public affairs programs stick with procedures that have worked in the past. _____

40. New techniques and methods are considered when developing public affairs programs. _____

41. We continue public affairs programs because we have had it for many years. _____

42. We started public affairs programs after strategic planning showed the public could hurt or help the organization. _____

SECTION C

Commanders generally have an idea about how public affairs should be practiced. Sometimes that idea differs from the public affairs officer. The following set of items is similar to those you answered for specific public affairs programs. This time, please indicate the extent to which **your commander believes public affairs should be practiced this way.**

1= STRONGLY AGREE   2= AGREE   3= NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE
4= DISAGREE   5= STRONGLY DISAGREE

43. The purpose of public affairs is to get publicity for the organization. _____

44. After completing a public affairs program, research should be done to determine how effective the program has been in changing people's attitude. ____

45. In public affairs, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications there is no time to do research. ____

46. In public affairs, the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave. ____

47. The purpose of public affairs is to develop mutual understanding between the commanders of the organization and publics the organization affects. ____

48. Before starting a public affairs program, one should look at attitude surveys to make sure the organization and its policies are described in ways publics would be most likely to accept. ____

49. In public affairs accurate information should be disseminated but unfavorable information should not be volunteered. ____

50. Before starting a public affairs program, surveys or informal research should be done to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.____

51. In public affairs, one mostly attempts to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out. ____

52. Before beginning a public affairs program, one should do research to determine public attitudes toward the organizations and how they might be changed. ____

53. The success of a public affairs program can be determined from the number of people who attended the event. ____

54. For this organization, public affairs and publicity mean essentially the same thing. ____

55. The purpose of public affairs is to change the attitudes and behavior of commanders as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics. ___

56. Keeping a clipping file is about the only way to determine the success of public affairs. ____

57. Public affairs should provide mediation for the organization to help commanders and publics negotiate conflict. ____

58. Public affairs is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics. ____

The next series of questions are about your commander. Please answer them to the best of your knowledge.

59. Does your commander understand the purpose and role of public affairs within the organization?

____ YES ____ NO

60. Does your commander have any formal training or education in public affairs or public relations?

____ YES
____ NO (Skip to Question 62)

61. What type of training or education has your commander had?

____ Civilian workshop or seminar
____ Military Commanders orientation to public affairs
____ Some college
____ Bachelor's degree
____ Other (Specify)_____

62. What type of public affairs experiences has your commander had in the past?

____ Good
____ None
____ Bad
____ Neutral
____ Other (Specify)_____

63. Is your public affairs expertise and advise sought by the commander when he or she makes organizational decisions?

___ Yes
___ No
___ Sometimes

64. How frequently do you communicate or meet with your commander about public affairs issues?

___ daily
___ weekly
___ bi-weekly
___ monthly
___ Other (Specify)_____

SECTION D

The next series of items lists tasks requiring special expertise or knowledge that is available in some public affairs offices. Using the same numbering system, choose the number that describes the extent to which your office or someone in the office has the expertise or knowledge to perform each task listed.

1= STRONGLY AGREE   2= AGREE   3= NEITHER TRUE NOR FALSE
4= DISAGREE   5= STRONGLY DISAGREE

65. Determine how publics react to the organization. __

66. Get publics to behave as your organization wants.__

67. Negotiate with an activist group.   __

68. Provide objective information about your organization.   __

69. Convince a reporter to publicize your organization.

70. Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics.   __
71. Understand the news values of journalists.   __

72. Get your organization's name into the media.   __

73. Keep bad publicity out of the media. ___

74. Conduct evaluation research. ___

75. Use attitude theory in a campaign. ___

76. Manipulate publics scientifically. ___

77. Get maximum publicity from a staged event. ___

78. Perform environmental scanning. ___

79. Prepare news stories that reporters will use. ___

80. Help management to understand the opinion of particular publics. ___

81. Perform as journalists inside your organization. ___

82. Persuade public that your organization is right on an issue. ___

This is the final section. Please answer the following questions about yourself.

83. You are:

___ Male   ___ 2nd Lt   ___ Capt   ___ Lt Col
___ Female   ___ 1st Lt   ___ Maj   ___ Col

84. How many years have you been practicing public Affairs in the Air Force?

___ Less than 2 years
___ 2 - 4 years
___ 5 - 10 years
___ 11 - 19 years
___ Over 20 years

85. Your undergraduate degree is in:

___ Public relations
___ Journalism
___ Mass communication
___ Advertising
___ Television/Radio
___ Other (Specify) _____

86. Check all levels of training you have completed in public affairs or public relations:

___ No training in public affairs
___ Some college level courses
___ A bachelor's degree
___ DINFOS Public Affairs Officer's course
___ A master's degree
___ DINFOS Senior Public Affairs Officer's seminar
___ Air Force Public Affairs Short Course
___ A doctoral degree
___ Other (Specify) _____

The title of your position is

_____

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO WRITE COMMENTS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. THIS COMPLETES THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

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